

Philip Skene  
of  
Skenesborough

Doris Begor Morton



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Philip Skene





Skene Coat of Arms



# *Philip Skene*

OF

## *Skenesborough*

Doris Begor Morton

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Doris Begor Morton

With best wishes  
Doris Begor Morton



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*I dedicate this book to my  
family who have patiently put  
up with twelve years of amateur  
research.*

.....

## Acknowledgments

*No formal acknowledgment can adequately express my gratitude to the many people from whom I received encouragement and assistance in writing this brief sketch of Philip Skene of Skenesborough. Resources of libraries and private papers of manuscript rooms were readily made available to me by librarians and curators who were most helpful.*

*I pay special tribute to my husband, John T. Morton, who has been a patient critic, mentor, and secretary.*

*I am indebted to Mrs. B. F. Carpenter and Mrs. Nelson Fagan of Whitehall, New York; Mrs. Norman Drew, Glens Falls, New York; and Mrs. Thomas Lape, Putnam, New York, for their criticism of the manuscript; to Miss C. Eleanor Hall, Port Henry, New York, and Harold Schofield, Essex, England, for their assistance in searching for special references; and to Col. W. Dean Trotter, Staindrop, North Darlington, England, for placing the Skene family records at my disposal.*



## Foreword

The vast wilderness that was the Champlain Valley two hundred years ago offered a challenge and an opportunity to any man with the vision and initiative to see and grasp its potential. Such a man was Philip Skene, founder of the settlement at the southernmost tip of that waterway, then named for its founder, now called Whitehall and currently celebrating the 200th Anniversary of its settlement.

The same attributes of steadfastness and perseverance that made Philip Skene persist in his efforts to establish his colony, from the year 1759 to the period of the Revolution, dictated his adherence to the political cause with which he had been affiliated and he never wavered in his belief in and loyalty to Great Britain and its King.

The story of the loyalists of the American Revolution has never been justly or sympathetically told. Likewise, while our libraries are full of biographies of our founding fathers, the life stories of those same founders who espoused the British side of that conflict of 1775 have been left a great blank. Such is the case of Philip Skene.

Mrs. Morton has for a period of 12 years been engaged in gathering every scrap of information on both sides of the Atlantic concerning the life and activities of the founder of her adopted town. It has been a labor of love — an avocation that I am sure has already well rewarded her for the time, effort and money spent in the search. But as is so often the case, her research has led her to hitherto hidden knowledge of the man and of his place in our history. This biography has been prepared from the depth of that knowledge of and sympathy with Philip Skene of Skenesborough — that she may set the record straight, correct erroneous legends and provide the background for an understanding analysis of one of the prominent citizens of our colonial period whose achievements were so outstanding that even his espousal of an unpopular political affiliation could not obliterate his place in the history of this nation and of this Champlain Valley in particular.

*Jane M. Lape*  
Member of the Staff  
Fort Ticonderoga, New York



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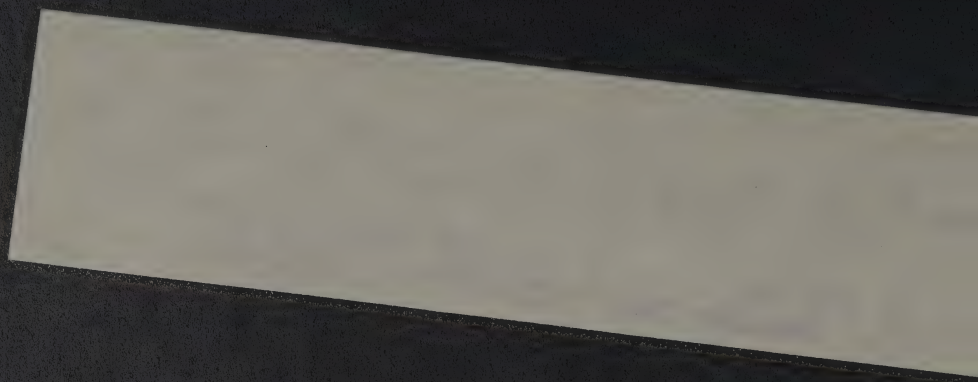
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# Errata

pp. 4, 76, 77, 79 for Col. W. Dean Trotter  
read Col. W. Dale C. Trotter

p. 75 for 2. ... d. 1870 read d. 1780  
75 bottom line eliminate 1836-1906





## Enigma

Time gives perspective to all things. Only within the last few years have historians begun truly to evaluate the character and motives of many of the participants of the Revolutionary War. This evaluation has not yet been done by lay readers of history who have to depend on printed records of years ago.

This is notably true in the case of Philip Skene, founder of Skenesborough, present day Whitehall, New York. Skene was a Tory and when the word *Tory* is mentioned, his name is often considered as something evil. In early gazetteers of New York State and biographical accounts of Philip Skene, confusing and conflicting statements may be found. Among them are the following:

*Philip Skene was a Scotchman; he was an Englishman.*  
In reality Philip came from a Scotch family but was born in London, never living in Scotland.

*Philip was a half-pay officer after his retirement from the British Army; he sold out of the Army completely.* The latter statement is true. Philip Skene of the First, 27th, and 10th Regiments never received half-pay as did another retired Philip Skene of the 72nd Regiment.

*Philip was captured at Skenesborough by the Green Mountain Boys; Philip's son, Andrew, was captured there when Skenesborough was taken May 9, 1775.* In fact, Philip was on his way home to Skenesborough from England at that time. The Americans made him prisoner at Philadelphia.

*Philip was not allowed to choose the "Rebel" side; he was an "Arch Tory".* As a matter of record, Philip was a loyal subject of King George III of England and believed that the Provincials of the New World could be persuaded from their rebel course.

*Philip had four or five horses shot from under him during the Revolutionary War; he had two horses shot from under him.* Philip's own request for payment for two horses should decide the truth of the second statement.

*Philip was responsible for Gen. Burgoyne's taking the route through Skenesborough; he was not responsible.* Al-

though Philip was an adviser of Gen. Burgoyne's, he really had no authority to make military decisions.

*Philip planned the raid on Bennington; he was called to assist the German officers after the raid was well started. As a matter of fact, Philip had remained in Skenesborough, intending to return to Canada after the British Army moved south. He was called at Gen. Burgoyne's request to assist the Germans after the start of the raid on Bennington.*

*Philip's land, "marshy and swampy", was sold for £14.11; part of it was sold for over £20,700. Really, the sum of £14.11 was part of the surveyor's bill for measuring the confiscated land.*

*Philip was classed as that "Devil Skene"; he was a well loved leader of his tenants. In war times name calling is easy.*

The search for details in the life of Philip Skene has been an intriguing one. It has led to Canada, England, and Ireland, besides many places in the United States. The author has read literally hundreds of original papers and met many delightful and cooperative people. The result is this life story of a man whose ancestral origin, in legend, is connected with a wolf's head.

## Family Origin

A double-edged dagger, a skein, is the basis for a fascinating legendary account of the origin of the Skene family name. Tradition traces this origin back to 1014 in Scotland. King Malcolm II of Canmore, Scotland, put down an uprising of the Danes and killed their general in battle. This Malcolm was the grandfather of the famous Duncan whom Shakespeare's Macbeth murdered.

During the trip home from battle, Malcolm II had to pass through the thick forests of Culbein and Stocket. From among the trees suddenly appeared a mad and hungry wolf which chose the King for his victim and pursued him some distance through the woods. The action of the wolf was seen, however, by a soldier, the second son of Donald of the Isles. Immediately the lad grabbed his plaid from his left shoulder, wrapped it around his left arm, and jumping toward the wolf stuck his protected arm into the animal's mouth. Drawing his skein, sheathed in the top of his stocking, and striking under his left arm, he pierced the wolf's heart. The head of the slain animal he proudly presented to his King.

Naturally the King was impressed by this act of bravery and homage. To show his gratitude he presented the lad with a great tract of land which contained a large lake, six miles around' "well plenished with fresh water fishes, Elk Bulls and crooked Cowes on the sides thereof." This land lies between the two rivers of Dee and Don in Aberdeen, Scotland, and both the boy and the land were called Skene for the dagger or skein with which he killed the wolf. Years later this land was erected into a barony by crown charter. It remained in the family in the male line till the death of an Alexander in 1827 when his nephew James, Earl of Fife, succeeded. It was sold in 1880.

Historically, the name Skene is first recorded in 1296 when John de Skene and his brother Patrick did homage to King Edward at Borwick. John lost the family lands for a time because he joined the forces of a relative, Donald Bain, who tried to seize regal power. Later during the reign of King Alexander, who also went north to fight, the Laird of Skene joined the King's forces and did such good service in directing the royal army through unknown territory that the family was restored to favor and given back its lands. Later in this country Philip and his son Andrew did similar service for Gen. Burgoyne in 1777.



## Skene Name

Confusion has often been rife over the pronunciation and spelling of the name *Skene*. Both *Skēne* and *Skāne* have been used. The dirk or dagger from which the Skene name was derived was spelled and pronounced *skein* in Scotland where the family originated.

Ethan Allen, a contemporary and one-time friend of Philip, delivered his sentences on paper as boldly as he lived. In a letter to Philip on March 10, 1772,<sup>2</sup> in which he explained he would not leave the country for protection, he used such words as *rageing* settlers, *sotiable* treatment, *campain*, and *cumfort*. In another letter<sup>3</sup> he addressed his friend as Major *Skane* of *Skanesborough*.

The late Stephen Pell of Fort Ticonderoga visited Mrs. Jemima Booth, a great grand-daughter of Philip, before her death in Paris in 1906. She said the family name was pronounced *Skāne*. Mrs. Booth was over ninety at the time. She also said erroneously she was the last living descendant of Philip. But such inaccuracies can well be overlooked as she was responsible for this section of the country's having some mementos of Philip Skene.

Proper names are difficult to spell by rule. Most educated men who misspelled the Skene name did so by using the double *ee*. Gen. Philip Schuyler, Gen. Thomas Gage, and the Earl of Dartmouth always used *Skene*. Sir William Johnson persisted in using *Skeen* while Gen. Amherst used both *Skene* and *Skeene* and even *Skeen*, two of the spellings often occurring in the same letter, which is not surprising as his military correspondence must have been conducted under great pressure of time. Gen. Rufus Putnam spelled the name *Skean*, but the most far-fetched of all was Governor *Skim* of *Skimsborough*, used by a British clerk in recording the claims of Tories who fled to Canada from Skenesborough and later were reimbursed by the British government for lands and goods lost.

The Skene families now in Scotland and England use both spelling and pronunciation *Skēne*. Robert Skene of the Australian branch of the family, the noted polo player, was surprised to hear of any other pronunciation.

Philip's middle name Wharton has often mystified history readers. The *Philip* is a family name, recurring again and again in the various branches of the family. The *Wharton* was derived from

the name of his father's friend in whose house he was born. He was not christened with the name *Wharton* and in adult life soon gave up its use, as he explained in a letter to his<sup>4</sup> children. Since his father had had a traitorous political association with this friend, Philip the Duke of Wharton, for which<sup>5</sup> both were at one time condemned to death, but not executed, for adhering to the Royal Stuart cause, one can readily understand why Philip did not retain its use.

One of the few relics of Philip Skene in Whitehall is the keystone of his house which is now on the mantle of the Masonic Lodge Room. Its initials PKS gave rise to much speculation. The P and S were easy but the K seemed to have no connection. The letters are arranged in such a way that both the P and K can be combined with the S. It is much more romantic and probable that the K stands for Katharine his wife, who furnished him such material assistance in founding his settlement.

Many organizations in Whitehall today use the name of the founder in their titles, as Skenesborough Chapter, Order of Eastern Star and Skenesborough Home Bureau. There are Skene Street and Skene Mountain. The Skene Valley Dairy owner says he used the spelling in the name for the valley in which his farm is located, Skene Valley, and for a time kept the spelling his father used before him, *Skeene*. The pupils who named the *Skeenic News*, the high school publication, christened an early year book with that name and later transferred it to their school paper. They chose the name not for its denotation but for its sound while the Skeene Valley Motors copied the spelling from the *Skeenic News*. Skene Manor, the restaurant, was named because of the mountain on which it stands and the first proprietor's desire for an historic name.

The final spelling and pronunciation of the name can well be left to the bold, clear handwriting that Philip Skene used in his voluminous correspondence, many examples of which are still in existence.

## Birth

In east central London, in a section called Holborn, lies a beautiful little park, attractively laid out with flowered walks, tall trees, and a lively little fountain where an impish dolphin plays. This Red Lion Square Park came into existence after London's World War II bombing, but in 1725 its area was a thickly apartmented residential section. Here in the parish of St. George the Martyr and in the home of his father's friend, Philip the Duke of Wharton, Philip Skene was born on January 9, 1725, the son of James and Mary Anne Skene.

Leading from this square in 1725 was a street called Orange. Down this street on February 5, Mary and James carried their first son to be baptized at the home of another family friend, Mr. Saunders. This baptismal practice was customary in those days, and Mr. Smith of Babbersy, a clerical relation, performed the baptismal rite with the Duke of Wharton as godfather. The translation from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, which is done for dates before 1750, sets these important times in Philip's life as January 20 and February 16, new style. This baptism is recorded in the early record book of the church St. George the Martyr, a short distance away in Queen's Square.

Although Orange Street has disappeared and much of Red Lion Square is now a park, the church of St. George the Martyr still stands. Mainly because of the efforts of its present energetic vicar, the Reverend R. Mercer Wilson, it is about the same as it was when completed in 1710.

In this church is the *Registrum Baptizatorum in Parochia St. Georgii Martyris* which reads: 1725. February 5 Philip son of James and Mary Anne Skeen. at Mr. Saunder's in Orange Street at home. born Jan. 9. By Mr. Smith of Babbersy; a relation.

And here at this early date began the misspelling of Philip's family name.



## Professional Soldier

Legend associates the origin of the Skene name with a soldier. Through the centuries many of the Skene men were professional soldiers. In the 18th century Philip Skene followed the family tradition.

Professional army life came to Philip at the age of eleven. After his father's death in 1736, he was adopted by his uncle, Capt. Andrew Skene. The Captain was then on duty in Ireland in the second battalion of the Royal Regiment of Foot, known as the Royal Scots, and Aide de Camp to Gen. Pearce, commanding in Ireland. Capt. Andrew and his wife had no children of their own. Philip was made a cadet in the Royal Musteriel and received pay and clothing in his uncle's company and regiment.

In 1739, the Royal Scots were sent out from Cork, Ireland, to Jamaica in the New World and with them went Capt. Andrew and Philip. At the age of fourteen Philip was in active service in the expedition against Porto Bello, an important port of transshipment in Panama to and from Spain. At this time the city was captured by the British fleet under the leadership of Adm. Edward Vernon and Gen. Wentworth. Lawrence Washington was in the same struggle and his home, later to belong to George Washington, he named Mount Vernon after his admiral.

Two years later Philip again saw action, this time in present-day Colombia. This same year, 1741, on September 11 he received his commission as ensign. The following year 1742 on March 30 Uncle Andrew, now a major, died in Jamaica. Shortly after this time, the Royal Regiment of Foot was sent home to England.

During the war of the Austrian Succession the Royal Regiment was sent to the Continent under the command of the rough but courageous Duke of Cumberland. Philip was present at the battle of Dettington on June 16, 1743, and in the battle of Fontenoy, May 10, 1745, where the English and their Allies were defeated by French Marshal Saxe in Belgium.

Philip was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Royal Regiment of Foot commanded by Lt. Gen. James St. Clair, on September 26, 1745. During this year he had been ordered to Scotland to recruit

for the British Army "with a proper<sup>6</sup> party and instructions". Although from a Scotch family this was the first time he had ever been on Scottish soil. The place of assembly was Fifeshire, but Philip, having been invited to live at his Great Uncle David Skene's home at Pitlour, made Pitlour the actual place of rendezvous and forwarded his troops to the regiment at Perth. He was very successful in that area and the neighboring Adney, the estate of his cousin Gen. Austruthe. While on this mission, he had his recruits helping daily in planting trees on his uncle's estate at Pitlour.

In 1745 Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, claimed the throne of England. Encouraged by the support of some of the Highland clans, he started for London. The Duke of Cumberland forced the Pretender and his followers into battle at Culloden Moor. Here the Royal Scots, Philip's regiment, saw action in the front line, April 16, 1746. Philip was wounded above his ear by a Highlander. This cut made him deaf in that ear for the rest of his life. In this battle he was against the Stuarts, the opposing side for which his father had almost lost his life in 1716. After this battle for a short period Philip was guard over the Earl of Balmerino, a Jacobite leader who was captured at Culloden and later executed.

In 1747 the Royal Scots were again sent to the Continent where Philip was in the battle of Lafelt and Bergen of Zoom. After the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1748 his regiment returned to Scotland. Here Philip was made Free Burgess of the Borough of Poisley, December 20, 1748. This is an honorary appointment given in small Scottish towns in recognition of services rendered. This is an example of the usual esteem that Philip engendered whenever he came in close association with people.

On August 16, 1750, Philip received his commission as lieutenant in the Royal Regiment, but by this time he had gone to Ireland with his regiment by way of Port Patrick and had met and married Katharine Heyden. Their first child, Andrew Philip, named after Uncle Andrew, was born in the Dublin barracks.

Great Britain and France began their struggle again in 1755 and Lt. Skene accompanied the Royals to America in 1756, embarking for Halifax by way of Cork. He left his family behind in Ireland excepting little Andrew whom he took to the New World with him.

From Halifax the troops sailed on to New York, went up the Hudson River to Albany, and on to Fort Edward, which had been built by Gen. Phineas Lyman of Connecticut in 1755. Here Philip, at various times, was in the company of Robert Rogers, the famous ranger, Gen. William Johnson, friend and counselor of the Indians, Gen. Israel Putnam of Put's Rock fame, and Col. William Haviland. On September 2, 1757, Philip became captain of the 27th or Inniskilling, an Irish regiment, commanded by the Hon. Lord Blakerrey.

Even at this early date he may have become acquainted with the South Bay and Wood Creek areas at the head of Lake Champlain, for scouting parties were being sent out constantly to the northward to spy on the actions of the enemy. The French with their allied Indians used to ascend the lake into that portion called the Drowned Lands — from Ticonderoga to the mouth of Wood Creek. Sometimes they entered South Bay with their canoes; other times they concealed the boats in the lake and crossed the land to the South Bay area. British and Provincial scouts, by tracks, could estimate the route taken by the enemy and the number of men involved.

To Fort Edward came provincial soldiers from the colonies of New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut on short term enlistments. Capt. Skene worked among the ship carpenters, sawyers, and brick layers building boats and preparing for an intended attack on Ticonderoga, then held by the French. Personal and professional standards of honor were dear to the heart of Philip, a soldier of the King; but he was to be disconcerted many times by the unorthodox procedure of colonial men, as shown by this early incident which happened at Stillwater, February 2, 1758.

A contingent of Massachusetts enlisted men had served their time and were eager to start for home. Capt. Skene had been ordered by Gen. Abercrombie to delay their departure until the General could hear from the Massachusetts governor as to their disposal. When the men demurred at their orders, Capt. Skene, thinking to convince them of their duty, read them the English law: <sup>7</sup> "if any man duly enlisted in His Majesty's service should leave the same without a Regular Discharge, he should suffer death". Undaunted, the colonial men went home, for under the terms of their enlistment they could not be kept longer.

By July 1758 all was ready for the intended siege of Ticonderoga, that fortress built by the French in 1755, the same year as Fort Edward. Lord Loudoun had been succeeded by Gen. James Abercrombie as head of the British Army in North America and on the evening of July 4 he looked out over his assembled troops ready to embark. Early on the morning of the 5th they set out over the blue waters of Lake George and by evening had made Sabbath Day Point. Here they halted for a short time but by 10 p. m. were on their way again. On the morning of July 6 the force debarked at a landing place near the foot of the lake.

With the English force was a beloved young leader, Lord Howe. A lad of enterprise, he was trying to break away from the formal English army prescribed way of fighting, a form entirely unfit for warfare in the woods of the New World. He was attempting to ease the load of the common soldier. He tried to introduce implements that would carry light, even to the cooking tools the men had to use. He ate and slept among his troops and his attempts in their behalf endeared him to the soldiers.



After debarkation the troops were formed in regulation army pattern with the regulars in the center and the provincials at the ends. Lord Howe and Capt. Skene advanced with the troops toward the French advance guard; one battalion, who set fire to their tents and fled. Journeying through thick forest with no adequate guide was a bit difficult for formation marching, and the British force broke and straggled through the woods. Lord Howe at the head of the right center met a French unit as confused as they. In the skirmish Lord Howe was killed and Philip Skene received another wound.

After this encounter on that terrifically hot July afternoon, the English troops "lay on their arms" wherever they happened to be. On the morning of July 7 they assembled at the landing again, reformed, and about 11 a. m. set out to take the two sawmills two miles from Ticonderoga. There they replaced a bridge which the enemy had destroyed.

On July 8 they expected to rush the French but were amazed to find great trees with branches sharpened and pointing toward them behind which was a high breastworks. During four hours of hard fighting over 1944 men perished, 1610 regulars and 334 provincials. Gen. Abercrombie ordered a retreat to Lake George, where the wounded were sent away that night in batteaux. The next morning the army set sail for Fort William Henry, which they reached that night. Thus ended the fiasco of Gen. Abercrombie's attempt on Ticonderoga.

In 1759 Gen. Jeffrey Amherst arrived in America to take command of the British Army. By June he had reached Fort Edward where Col. William Haviland and his Inniskillings were waiting; among them was Capt. Skene in charge of various affairs, one of them the building of radeaus or work boats.

Again the British force moved north over the waters of Lake George, but this time there was no retreat. The French evacuated Fort Ticonderoga, first attempting its destruction by gun powder. Their efforts were not wholly successful. They had set fire to the powder magazine, but Capt. Skene rushed through the flames and threw his coat over an open barrel of gun powder. Lifting the large French barrel, he shouted, <sup>8</sup>"A guinea for every man who does like me", and carried it through the flames from the magazine. Many volunteers who did not have the strength to carry a barrel alone, assisted each other in following his example and saved the fort from complete destruction. An eye witness called this an act of <sup>9</sup>"unparalleled matchless gallantry, bravery and strength".

From Ticonderoga the British followed the French to Crown Point, which the French also abandoned. Here Capt. Philip Skene on July 31, 1759, was made a Major of Brigade of the Northern Army, the position from which he obtained the title Major and which was probably given as a reward for his action at Ticonderoga.



The English had determined on a new fort at Crown Point set back from the lake, and all men became busily engaged in its structure. Major of Brigade Skene was a busy person. His boundless energy required activity. He was engaged in all sorts of tasks. One day he would be across the lake showing a work detail how to harvest a field of peas "<sup>10</sup>taking care that they pluck them and to take none but is fit to be gathered and they do not spoil them in gathering". Afterwards at camp he would see that the peas were divided equally among the messes. Another day he would be showing the detail where to cut grass, again on the eastern side of the lake.

In October Amherst went to Canada to assist Gen. Wolfe at Quebec, and Skene, Major of Brigade under Brigadier Ruggles, had orders to strengthen the military fortifications at Crown Point. The provincial troops at the fort for the winter were required to furnish all the men they could to finish the work as soon as possible so that the troops could get into winter quarters. By December 4 the barracks in the small forts were nearly finished and a well was begun in the fort.

In this same busy period Philip, planning his settlement at the head of Lake Champlain, by November 1759 had settled a "number of poor families and some servants".

By January 1760 the officers were pretty well huddled, though the chimneys were not finished. Skene was given permission to get some of Roger's rangers to enlist in this work. By July the Grenadier Fort, which had given trouble with mason work, was complete enough so that the Barracks could be begun. By November 1760 the stone barracks were finished, but the wooden ones had no chimneys and the officers had to remain in huts outside the fort.

In January 1761 a detachment was sent to Ticonderoga for clothing, but so many of the men were frostbitten that, after a wholesale amputation of toes, most of them were pronounced unfit for duty. In February plans for two new gardens at Crown Point were made, one for officers between the Light Infantry and Ruggles Rock and one for the men between that and the road. In May Skene had been made overseer of them, in training, as Col. Haviland said, "<sup>11</sup>against he settles at Fort Ann". Seed was sent by Gen. Amherst.

During this winter small pox carried off many of the Rangers. To prevent the Provincials from catching the dread disease as they arrived in the spring, Skene fitted up some of the huts for the sick and burned the ones they were in — evidences of which have recently been found by the archeologists at Crown Point. Col. Haviland suggested a hospital on the point below Skene's blockhouse for those with this disease as a good spring was near it. Skene had charge of one of the three blockhouses erected on the peninsula, commonly called Skene's blockhouse. This was the Windsor blockhouse, located

on Bulwagga bay. It was one of three that sat on a line cutting across the Crown Point peninsula south of the fort then being built by the English. From this blockhouse Skene was returning one day at dusk when he saw two enemy Indians. He endeavoured to capture them but they got away. Reconnaissance by the enemy was constant. Sometimes suspicious actions had to be investigated, for soldiers escaped from Canada were coming here. Such a case occurred in June 1760 when Skene waited all night on the lake before he could rescue two Rangers escaped from Canada.

Another duty of the Major of Brigade was the auditing of accounts. Paul Berbeen traveled from Oswegatchi to Montreal to Crown Point to have his accounts settled by Capt. Skene in September. Capt. Ogden's were settled there also in September. In this month Skene escorted two French ladies to Montreal.

During 1761 the garden and grass were almost entirely destroyed by lack of rain. The drought brought with it the small black flies that ate what was left. The springs stopped running. Supplies from the north were greatly plundered. Many of the casks were filled with stones and chips. Major Skene, who attended the unloading, reported at least a fifth short.

During early 1761 much talk of the possible West Indies war went the rounds. Col. Haviland set out for that place and by July 1761 Skene knew that he was ordered away to Havana. He embarked at Long Island on *HMS James*, having helped Col. Grant, Brigadier Major Moncrief, and Col. Walsh during the embarkation of the troops. They arrived in the Havannah, as it was then called, by December. Gen. Amherst wrote to Col. Haviland October 5, 1761, <sup>12</sup>"Next after yourself I know the loss of Major Skene must be greatly felt at Crown Point."

The war in the West Indies went forward and the last of the great strongholds was the famous and dread Morro Castle. Philip was the first to enter the "<sup>13</sup>emminent deadly breach" in the wall at its taking. For this bravery he was given August 14, 1762, the post of greatest importance, Provost Marshal of the city or Town Major of the Havannah. This post kept him in the Havannah until 1763, the forces having returned home in 1762.

In the Havannah Skene busied himself as always in the interest of tenants, friends, and King. Widows wrote notes authorizing him to receive their pay money. "I <sup>14</sup>authorize and empower Major Skene to receive my Husband's of the 35th Regiment's prize money, Given unto my hand this 20th of October 1762, Sarah Crean." And with this paper in the Fort Ticonderoga Museum Library is her receipt to Skene of its deliverance. Others authorized him to dispose of slaves they had obtained while in the West Indies.

Skene reached New York from the Havannah July 25, 1763. His pay did not cover the last six months of the year 1762 and he continued as Major of Brigade to the Army in North America without a new commission until Gen. Amherst returned to England. It was renewed August 6, 1764.

The settlement Skene had left at the head of Lake Champlain needed much attention and Skene with characteristic zeal attended to its affairs. When his regiment was ordered back to Ireland, he asked to be allowed to stay in America. He was granted a six months' leave. Then he requested Gen. Thomas Gage to allow him to exchange his post with Capt. Henry Cowan (Conran) of the Tenth Foot. This commission was dated May 26, 1768. On December 7, 1768, he was appointed by Sir Henry Moore, Governor of the Province of New York to be colonel of a regiment of Militia Foot within "that part of the colony of Albany, comprehending all of the settlements to the northward of Saratoga." A year later he sold out of the army entirely to Lt. Lawrence Parsons of the Tenth Foot, December 4, 1769. This put Philip out of line of preferment. He otherwise would have become a major general. Thus ended Philip's professional career as a soldier of the King. All of his activities that came after this were carried on as a private citizen, at his own expense.

During Philip's lifetime there were three Philip Skenes in the British army. Philip Skene of Skenesborough in his professional life belonged to the Royal Scots or First Foot, the 27th or Inniskilling, and the 10th Foot. Unlike the Philip Skene of the 72nd Regiment who retired on half pay, Philip Skene of Skenesborough sold out of the army entirely and never received half pay as a retired officer. The third Philip was a captain in the 26th Foot and later a major in the 52nd Foot.

The two titles, major and colonel, are questioned in many accounts of Philip's life. He was entitled lawfully to both and both were used in America and England, even after he became lieutenant governor of Ticonderoga and Crown Point.



## Landowner

Philip Skene became acquainted early with the territory around Skenesborough. He knew the value of its land and its trees. Crown Point was but a few hours' sail from the head of Lake Champlain and his restless energy doubtless led him on exploring trips to the southward. His close association with Gen. Jeffrey Amherst disclosed the General's idea that some bulwark settled by disbanded soldiers should be established between the old enemies, the French in Canada and the English at Albany. Such an ambitious nature as Philip's could readily be excited when the General suggested that he make such a settlement at the head of the lake.

Accordingly in the year 1759 Skene did begin such a settlement and by November had a few families settled there where the 59th Regiment under Col. John Wilkins was already encamped in the fort on the hill to the west of Wood Creek.

Then began the long drawn-out struggle of obtaining patents to the land he had settled. On November 10, 1759, Skene drew up his first memorial, a formal request in special language, to Gen. Amherst and requested him to present it to the King. He asked to be granted a patent to the land that he had already settled. Accompanying the petition was the description of the boundaries of the tract of land he desired:<sup>15</sup>

Crown Point Camp  
the 10th of Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1759

The Boundaries of a Tract of Land which Major of Brigade  
Skene Memorials for

From the mouth of East Bay to the Head of South Bay, from the Head of South Bay to the Garrison Land at Fort Edward, from Fort Edward Garrison Land to the Head of Wood Creek, from Wood Creek to the Easternmost part of East River, taking all the River within the Line from the Easternmost Part of East River to the Narrows Of Indian Camp Pond (which Pond empties itself into East River) from thence to the head of the first of the two large Creeks Bearing Easterly, from thence to the head of the second large Creek bearing Northerly, from the second large Creek bearing Northerly to the Mouth of the Creek opposite Terronderoga, and from thence to the Waters of the first mentioned Bounds — Philip Skene.



Gen. Amherst presented the memorial December 12, 1759, in a letter to William Pitt, Secretary of State, in which he recommended Skene highly: "I know no man in his post more deserving than he is."

In August 1760 Lt. Gov. Colden of New York wrote the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations in London that he would honor the command of June 13 ordering him to have this land surveyed for Philip Skene. It took a long time for messages to cross the ocean. But Mr. Colden was cautious, for, as he said, the area requested by Skene was very vaguely described, as were most requests for land at that time. And since his last letter to the Lords Commissioners some officers of the province had petitioned for some of the same land. However, he promised he would put a stop to those proceedings until he heard again from the Commissioners.

During the following years Skene settled his lands with displaced people who were willing to stop in Skenesborough in their flight from the north to Albany, with soldiers from the West Indies campaign, with families that his wife recruited from England, and with people that answered the broadsides he put up in New York City.

On his return from the campaign in the West Indies in July 1763 he found that only fifteen persons of the thirty families and only thirteen of the twenty-two Negroes he had purchased in the West Indies remained. Further he discovered that tracts of land he had petitioned had been surveyed for an artillery company. Since he had already spent £1200 on the settlement and did not wish to lose it, Skene immediately, August 17, 1763, wrote to Lt. Gov. Colden that he had so found this land granted to the soldiers and informed him that this area contained land at Fort Anne that he had already settled. Lt. Gov. Colden declared he was not aware that Skene had settled any lands on Wood Creek, but knowing that Gen. Amherst regarded Skene highly, he would do all he could to help. Strangely enough the Council of New York suggested that Skene and the soldiers settle their own differences.

On September 9 of this year Philip again made a formal claim for a patent in a memorial to Lt. Gov. Colden and asked that he and forty-nine associates be granted an area of land . . . "And <sup>1st</sup>that Your Honor will be favorably pleased on the Terms of His Majesty's Instructions, to Grant to Your Petitioner & Forty nine Others to be named in a Schedule hereafter to be presented, the Royal Grant for as much as Shall be found fit for Cultivation, of the Lands vested in the Crown Lying on, & Adjacent to Wood Creek in the County of Albany; Beginning in the Northern Line, or Boundary of the Township of Kingsbury, near the Spot Occupied by Griffiths, Parks, & Bemis, Living on the Premises: thence Extending to Scone Creek, Called Forks Creek, to the Distance of One Mile above the Falls in the Same Creek, thence to the Falls of Wood Creek; Comprehending

the Breadth of Half a Mile on the West Side of Wood Creek, thence crossing Wood Creek, to East River about One Mile, thence to the Head of East Creek, which Empties itself into Wood Creek at the Beaver Dam, near Park's House, thence to the head of the Southern most Part of Wood Creek including within the line the whole of that part of Wood Creek, Thence westerly to Hudson's River, thence Along the River to the Southerly Line of the Township of Kingsbury, & then along the Bounds of that Township to the Place of Beginning.—"

In November 1763 the Council advised that a tract of land be given Philip Skene, 25,000 acres in a square comprehending the Falls of Wood Creek where he had a mill, the Creek running pretty near though the middle of the tract.

That same November Philip went to England where he requested a further grant of 20,000 acres. On May 23, 1764, George III commanded that this additional land be surveyed near where Skene had made his settlements and that the land be granted. The Earl of Hillsborough wrote Lt. Gov. Colden that this grant of 20,000 acres had been made.

Now came confusion. Lt. Gov. Colden wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough he had granted, according to his Lordship's command of June 8, 1764, 25,000 acres of land to Skene. Now he received from the King's Order in Council an order to grant 20,000 acres. Thinking the Earl meant to give Skene only 20,000 acres, the Council of the Province of New York seemed only too happy to lop off 5,000 acres from the original grant, since they had already granted land around Fort Anne to officers of the army who were unwilling to give over to Skene. The part decided on to be cut out was the land at Fort Anne since it could not be with the rest of the land in one tract. This they had granted to Joseph Walton and his associates.

Learning of this state of affairs on his return from London, Skene appeared before the Council at Albany with witnesses, men who had been in England at the time of his obtaining the Royal Grant for 20,000 acres. One of them, Col. Grogham, and Skene were allowed to testify and convinced the Council that the 20,000 acres was intended to be in *addition* to the 25,000 which the Earl of Hillsborough knew he had. Perhaps the knowledge that Skene had brought his family and 60 other persons to settle and had one hundred more families coming from England lent incentive to the Council. In any case they decided the 25,000 acres were to be granted but the 20,000 acres held back until the Council heard directly from the Earl of Hillsborough. To this Philip was willing to agree.

On January 8, 1765, Skene presented another memorial to the Council. In this he explained he had been under great expense of settling the land and paying for the people who came from England.

Since many of the forty-nine men who were named in his first memorial were scattered and even beyond the sea, and since he was under no restraint that would not allow him to alter his associates, he requested that twenty-four associates be allowed him and that the tract of land be made into a township since this would help to settle the land faster. The men were to be: John Maunsel, Thomas Moncrief, Nathaniel Marston, Lawrence Read, Hugh Wallace, Alexander Wallace, Thomas White, John Marston, John Gill, Robert Stevens, Robert Alexander, John Moore, Joseph Allicock, Richard Curson, Evert Bancker, Jerard Bancker, James Deas, John Lamb, Boyle Roche, Acheson Thompson, John R. Myer, Peter Ketteltas, Levinus Clarkson, and Abraham Brazier.

At long last, March 13, 1765, Skene and these twenty-four associates were granted a charter of 1,000 acres apiece to be laid out in a square tract on both sides of Wood Creek to the westward of the falls and to the westward of the sawmill already built at the falls with the usual allowance for highways under the quit rent provisions. One family was to be settled on each 1,000 acres within three years. The tract was to be constituted a township called Skenesborough after the plan of the settlement at Kingsbury.

The usual reservations were made: all mines of gold and silver; all white or other sorts of pine trees of the growth of 24 inches diameter and upwards of 12 inches from the earth fit for masts for the Royal Navy; Wood Creek to be a common public highway; and every year at New York Custom House five shillings six pence to be paid for each 100 acres.

Even the form of government for the township was prescribed. There should be two assessors, one treasurer, two overseers of the poor, one collector, and four constables, all chosen and elected out of the inhabitants of the township every year on the last Tuesday in September at the most public place. If any officer for any reason did not fulfill his term, within forty days another election should be held. The grant was to be registered in New York within six months. On the same evening the grant was made, the twenty-four associates met with Skene and signed their shares over to him.

On March 15 in New York Philip Skene and John Gifford gave a bond for the settling of twenty-five families within three years. On March 18 Skene asked again for the patent of 20,000 acres granted him by the King, land that he had also settled to the north and east of the land already granted to him at Skenesborough. But the patent for this area was not granted until July 6, 1771. There were two tracts of land in this patent. One contained nine thousand acres and was joined to Skenesborough on the north and became a part of the township. This is familiarly known as Skene's Little Patent. The second contained 11,000 acres. This tract evidently lay much within



the present state of Vermont, a tract of choice land mostly of intervale ground and beaver meadows. Skene declared often that none of his land lay within the New Hampshire Grants.

In the days of early wars soldiers were given land as a bonus for their services. Many evidently sold the area sight unseen. Officers received more than soldiers of course and as a bonus for his "having served during the late war as Town Major of the Havannah" Skene was granted July 6, 1771, 3,000 acres of land on the west side of Lake Champlain. The larger part, 2,400 acres, was in the present town of Westport on the Bay of Rochers Fendus where a section on the lake is still called Skene's Woods. The more valuable part was 600 acres at Cheever, just north of the present Port Henry, which contained a rich iron ore bed. It became known naturally as Skene's Ore Bed and from this area his Negroes mined the ore, transported it up the lake to Skenesborough, staying overnight, when necessary, at the houses Skene built for that purpose on a point of land six miles south of Ticonderoga, called Point Catherine, on the west side of the lake. It is still often referred to as Nigger's Marsh. He bought this 150 acres from Sergeant Mason and one Crane, a private of the 27th Regiment, to whom it had been granted October 1763.

Between the years 1764-1769 some soldiers on the Artillery Patent turned over their land to Skene; Artillery Patent of 1,000 acres purchased from William Grant near Fort Anne and Artillery Patents of 1,000 acres each purchased from John Kennedy, William Goodman, and Walter Marshall. On the last was Halfway Brook with a waterfall forty feet high. Here were the sawmill and the block-house that Skene had built.

Besides this land Andrew had petitioned for and been granted August 22, 1769, 2,000 acres to the northeast of Skenesborough. In 1764 Lt. William McIntosh had been granted, as a reduced officer, 2,000 acres of land which lay to the north of the Little Patent and Philip bought it on February 11, 1773.

Thus the land of Philip Skene and his family covered 56,350 acres and it was this sizable piece of property that was taken by the State of New York, October 22, 1779, when Philip and Andrew were attainted. By this Act of Attainder their property was confiscated and they themselves declared outlaws, and <sup>17</sup>"if each or any one of them shall at any time be found in any part of this State, shall be, and are hereby judged and declared guilty of felony." They were declared adherents to the enemies of the State.

Philip and Andrew Skene should not have lost their land. The Articles of the Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and the United States signed in Paris, November 30, 1782, said that no more confiscations of land should be made and that provision for the restoration of estates of real British subjects should be made. This was



ratified by Congress in January 1784. Philip of England and Andrew of Ireland were real British subjects; they did not live in America after the Declaration of Independence. They requested the restoration of their lands in 1785 but to no avail. The lands were advertised and sold, piece by piece.

Early historians state that the lands because of their unhealthy climate were sold for £14.11. This sum is Alexander Webster's first bill for surveying the confiscated lands. Subsequent bills for surveying were over £74.8.

The land was valuable. James Duane, Mayor of New York, who knew the value of lands in the colonies and who had passed the Skene estate many times, set its value at \$58,000 without allowing for the improvements Skene had put upon it. Philip Schuyler was interested enough to offer a bid of \$10,000 for 500 acres of it and declared it worth at least the 20 shillings per acre he had paid for his own at Schuylerville. According to the Book of Forfeitures containing the record of confiscated land in this area, 35,000 acres of Skene's land were sold for about £20,729. Not all his acreage is listed. The Skenes lost a rich estate that was giving them a large annual income and received nothing for the land so unjustly wrested from them.

## Buildings

A long valley between two hills, now called Skene Mountain and West Mountain, erupts at the northern end into intervale land and a harbor at the head of Lake Champlain. Because of this topography several groups of buildings or settlements were made near the head of the lake.

In the Skene papers Cumberland is mentioned as being at the falls on the west side of Wood Creek. Andrew planned to call the area settled at East Bay, Amherst. At the falls on the east side of the harbor was Skenesborough. Besides these, other buildings were located about a mile south on the east bank of Wood Creek. This whole area became known as Skenesborough, the names Cumberland and Amherst being found in but one reference each.

Without doubt the first buildings to be erected in Skenesborough were the blockhouse and barracks of the French and Indian Wars, which stood on the hill to the west of Wood Creek. The spot would be approximately the north end of the present railroad tunnel. Here in 1759 Col. John Wilkins with his 59th Regiment of Foot was stationed at the time Philip Skene started his settlement.

In September 1776 Philip Cortland set a company of idle Dutch carpenters to getting out timbers for a new barracks which was to be 96 feet long and 16 feet wide. This new building was to have six rooms on the first floor and six on the second. In October Col. Cornelius Wynkoop, who had been ill, returned to Skenesborough and by October 18 had the fort finished.

Evidently speed and pressure of time intervened with the plan, for November 8, 1776, Bernard Romans, the noted map maker, reported to Congress his opinion of the fortifications at Skenesborough. The fort was an irregular polygon and "18by its form indefensible with a vengeance." It occupied so much ground that 300 men would be needed to defend it and there was no well within the stockade. The palisade was made of slabs mainly and the gate was only a three inch thickness of pine.

The barracks were 45 feet by 20 feet and a "foolish" structure called a story and a half. In spite of Romans' suggestions, Col. Wyncoop in charge at Skenesborough said the fort was good enough and besides the carpenters wanted to go home for the winter.

This fort was abandoned by the Americans on July 6, 1777, when the British regiments arrived from the north. Retreating Americans

reported that the fort was set afire, but it evidently was saved as the victorious British troops were later posted in and around it. In the War of 1812 the old fort was pulled down and another erected in its place.

One of the first structures Philip built on the east side of Wood Creek at the 20 foot falls was a wooden saw mill with a framed mill dam. This mill sawed boards lengthwise from the tree trunks, making a pit underneath a necessity. It was built before 1765 as Skene listed it as already there when he advertised for settlers in New York that year. It evidently did good work on the virgin trees of the area, even though S. DeWitt Bloodgood called it the "19confounded little sawmill" when he and his father, a carrier of army supplies, were forced to stop by and draw logs for it in early 1777. Adolphus Benzel reported on the forests along Lake Champlain in 1772 that for a mile above Kane's Falls at Fort Anne there was mast timber to six feet in diameter upwards and white oak from the diameter of 20 to 36 inches when squared.

This mill was burned July 6, 1777, when the Americans retreated and the dam across Wood Creek destroyed by the British occupation forces to allow them to get their boats up Wood Creek. On the east side also was a stone gristmill destroyed at the same time.

On the west side of the harbor was the iron forge or, as Philip's memorial described it, "20a most complete Bloomery for constructing bar iron of four fires and two hammers with its implements," housed in a building about 46 feet square. Near-by was a large coal house.

As one of the industries at Skenesborough was the raising of blooded horses and cattle, Philip was very proud of his barn and stables completed by December 1770, even though he had "21been embarrassed for lack of nails." It was a large structure for those times, 134 feet long by 35 feet wide, built as he said of the "prettiest blue stone you ever saw" and in the English manner. The stone blocks doubtless were hewn from the nearby limestone ledges. Philip did not intend this barn for a fort, but the British in 1777 loop-holed it for musketry when they occupied it during their three weeks' stay in Skenesborough.

Skenesborough House was located on the east side of the harbor opposite the fort and 40 rods from the falls. It stood in front of the barn facing the lake. The road to Fair Haven up Burt Hill led east from this house and barn. The house also was built of limestone blocks. It was, like the barn, a larger structure than usual in this area. It stood two and a half stories high, 56 feet in length and 46 feet in breadth with an additional wing of 30 by 20 feet. Over the entrance to this building was the keystone with its PKS, 1770 that now rests on the mantle of the Masonic Temple in Whitehall.

According to James Rogers of Hebron, one of the soldiers quart-

ered in it in the winter of 1780, a large hall ran through the middle of the house dividing the space into four rooms. The stairway to the chambers was on one side of the hall and the second story was divided in the same manner. The garret probably had windows in it.

An old resident described the vault in the cellar in which Mrs. Skene was buried in 1771. It was a square area in one corner with a wooden half door in which a glass panel was placed. The house was never completely finished. The hardwood flooring was stored in the upper part waiting until Philip got back from Europe.

Both the house and the barn were destroyed on March 21, 1780, when Gen. Guy Carlton sent Indians and soldiers south in forays to rid the area of any strongholds. Andrew was one of the officers that accompanied this group and saw his home destroyed. These stones probably remained in piles like those of Fort Ticonderoga before restoration and were gradually carried away for building purposes. One old deed speaks of Skene's ruins and the keystone of the house was built into the basement of an Episcopal Church on the site of the present Masonic Temple. The church was sold to the Baptist Society and later burned.

Besides these main buildings there were others to house the overseer, the workmen, the Negroes; then there were houses in which the tenants lived. These were scattered around the intervalles for as Skene reported, William Hutton, the Bartholomews, and others lived to the back of his barn. Others lived along Granville Creek or Mettowee River. Three large framed bridges over the creeks were destroyed by the British in 1777.

At Cheever, just north of the present Port Henry, was a 600 acre plot called Skene's ore bed. Four tenants were developing 400 acres. At a settlement called Raymond's Mills there was a mill, several houses, a wharf for loading iron ore, and huts which the Negroes occupied while getting out the ore.

At Point Catherine six miles south of Ticonderoga, Philip built two houses. One was occupied by a Negro couple he had freed and the other was used for travelers' convenience.

At Fort Anne seven tenants were developing 1500 acres. Here at the 40 foot falls on Half Way Brook, which he called Scone Creek, Philip erected a saw mill on the southerly side of the stream. On a rock nearby he built a blockhouse. From Wood Creek, into which Half Way Brook flowed, to the mill, the water was deep enough for navigation. These mills were called Cheshire's mills because John Cheshire had charge of them for Skene. When Gen. Burgoyne's troops went through Fort Anne in 1777, these buildings were left standing. They were not destroyed until October 1780 when Gen. Carlton sent raiders from Canada.

These scattered buildings were the ones around which the industry of Skene's settlement was developed.



## Settlement at Skenesborough

A manor? A colony? A plantation? All these pretentious names have been applied to Philip Skene's settlement at the head of Lake Champlain. Was it not just a home for a soldier who had wandered far and wide over the world, forced to leave his family behind? When a close friend and army superior, Gen. Jeffrey Amherst, dwelt on a plan to erect a barrier between the hostile French of Canada and the English of Albany, before Canada was ceded to Great Britain, what a dream must have built up in Philip's mind to combine patriotism and individual advancement. Right at hand at the head of the lake that could be a main highway for trade and travel, was a land of intervalles, rich in soil, rich in large trees, and rich in scenery so like the hills and intervalles of his wife's native Arklow County in Ireland; all it lacked was the purple heather. His experience in army life fitted him as a leader for this barrier between the old enemies.

Besides working at top speed on the fort at Crown Point in 1759, Skene was able to take time out to go up the lake and settle by autumn, at his own expense, several families. The next two years added to the number so that by 1761 thirty families were settled on the land. Great was his energy. Col. William Haviland wrote from Crown Point in February 1760 to Gen. Amherst: "22Major Skeen is full of his New Estate and tho' he is hard of hearing, we cannot whisper South bay, wood Creek or Fort Ann that he does not bounce, and open Out a map that has any of these places on it his whole attention is taken up there and would talk of that Country half of the day . . ."

People in the old world were already looking to the new as the land of opportunity and again Haviland wrote Amherst: "23Major Skeen is very thankful for your good opinion of him as a Farmer, I believe he longs much for the Answer of his Memorial: I know he is so full of the Scheme that he writes about once a week to his wife, and I dare say mostly on that subject, as I am sure very little that passes here would afford entertainment so frequent to any one on the other Side of the Water; Indeed he Owned last night that his wife was looking out for People to come and Settle here."

Besides the area at Wood Creek Skene was intent on the area at Scone Creek at Fort Anne. Col. Haviland noted again: "24Major Skeen I have made Over Seer of the Farm about the priest's house

he is very busy Sowing of corn, and practizing that business, as I tell him Against he Settles at Fort Ann."

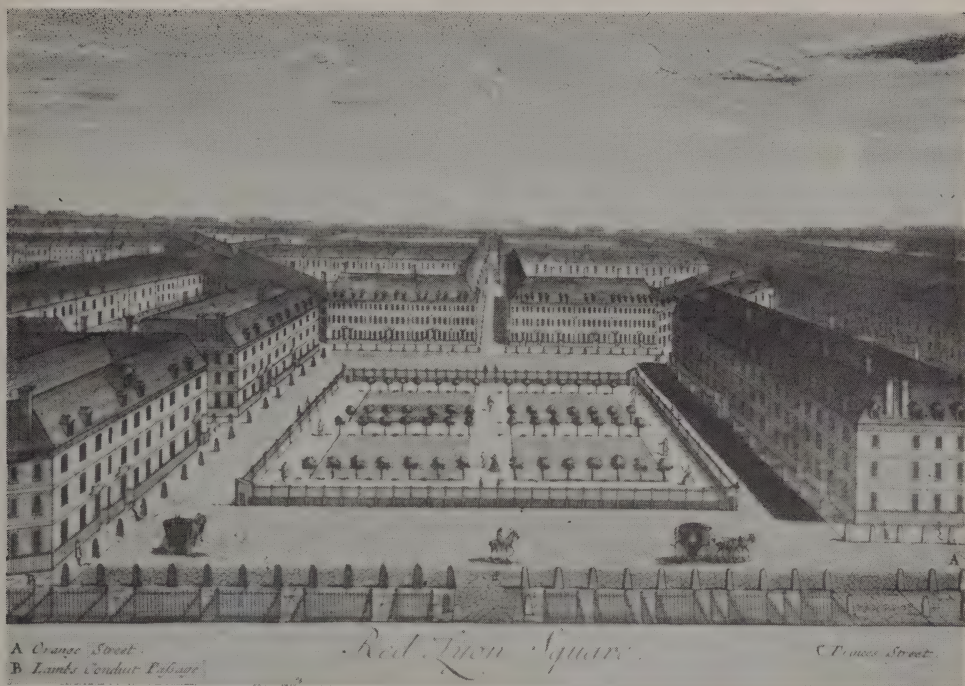
Displaced persons were another source of inhabitants. In 1761 and 1762 Gen. Thomas Gage published an ordinance to force the inhabitants of Canada to give up British subjects they were holding. Great numbers appeared. On May 28 he sent 21 British children prisoners who had been bought from the Indians, up the lake on their way to New York to rejoin their families. Some of the families enroute were happy to stop off at Skenesborough. Col. Haviland wrote Gen. Amherst June 4, 1761: "<sup>25</sup>Major Skeen has sent three Families nineteen in number to his place they went by their own desire and will be forwarded to Albany if you disapprove of his keeping them. He begs his respects to you and would take some of them that are going down without Parents if you would give them to him." In answer Gen. Amherst wrote: "<sup>26</sup>Major Skene is very welcome to the families he has taken; I am certain they can no where be more Employed for the King's service and the publick good, than under his inspection."

But in October 1761 the Inniskilling Regiment from Crown Point was sent to the Havannah and Skene went with them. His settlement had to be left in the hands of an overseer. Capt. Ormsby of the Ticonderoga fort complained to Gen. Amherst in 1762 that Mr. Campbell, overseer of Skene's settlement, had misappropriated some rum that he had been allowed to take for Skene's workmen and had used it to trade with Indian hunters for venison and furs. The Indians, in turn, sold the rum to the soldiers at Ticonderoga and being drunk themselves, became great nuisances, especially the Mohawks. Two nights running they sneaked into the fort and stole altogether 26 hogs belonging to Capt. Ormsby and the sutler at Ticonderoga.

Such leadership as Mr. Campbell's might well have been the cause of the settlement's decrease in population, for when Philip returned to Wood Creek after July 25, 1763, the day he landed in New York from the Havannah, he found but 15 people of the 30 families left and only 13 of the 22 Negroes he had sent home. He immediately commenced the work of improvement. This included the obtaining of patents to the land, getting new settlers, and bringing his family out from Ireland to their new home. After straightening out the controversy over the Artillery Patent at Fort Anne, he improved the sawmill he had already constructed there and added a blockhouse for protection against marauding Indians and French. This settlement he put in charge of Mr. Cheshire and the settlement often was spoken of as Cheshire's mill. It was located on Halfway Brook which Skene called Scone Creek.

In November 1763 Philip sailed for England on the sloop-of-war *Weazel* in the company of General Amherst, Colonel Amherst, Major





From an old print



Some Skene Family portraits in home of  
Col. W. Dean C. Trotter, North Darlington, England





Church in Hartwell, England,  
which is record of Philip Skene  
burial place



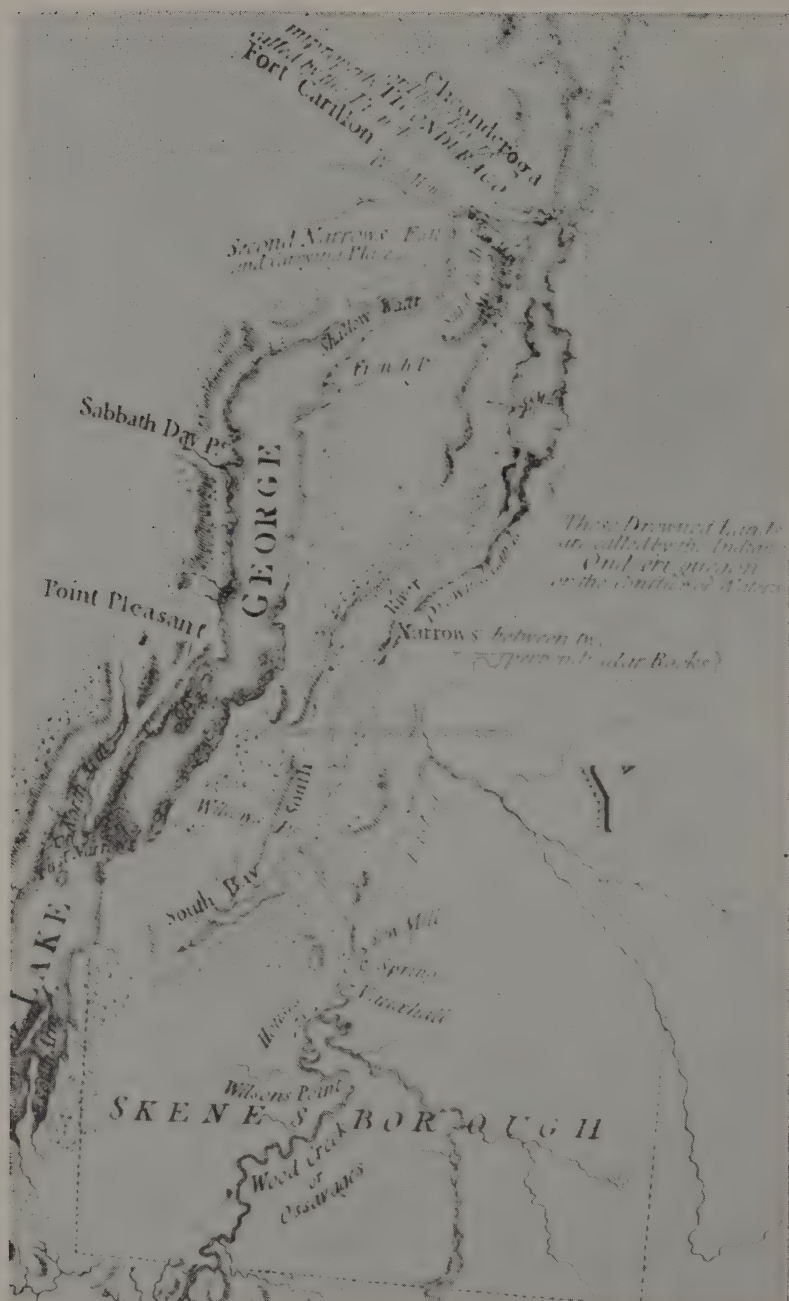
St. George the Martyr Church  
Queen's Square, London, in which  
is the record of Philip Skene's  
birth



Return of Survey, February 25, 1765, for Philip Skene, John Maunsel and 23 others  
of a tract of 25,000 acres of land on both sides of Wood Creek

Courtesy of New York State Library





Section of A Survey of Lake Champlain by William Brassier.

Courtesy of Canadian Archives





Artist's conception of Skenesborough House and Barn  
by Wayne Latrell





Abercrombie, and Mr. Mair. During the time there he petitioned for 20,000 additional acres. By July 3, 1764, he set out from England with his family, landing at Philadelphia. By December 1764 he had them housed in New Jersey for the winter. Besides his family he brought with him 60 other persons and had engaged 100 families more to come from Europe. Some of those who came with him were indentured people.

The winter months of this year were the usual busy ones for Philip. A bond between John Gifford, a mariner of New York, and Philip Skene to settle 25 families on the 25,000 acres first petitioned for was filed in New York March 13, 1765. He posted an advertisement in New York City on June 7, 1765, in an attempt to draw settlers to the area at the head of Lake Champlain. This advertisement summarized the progress that had been made up to that time in Skenesborough and offered inducements to prospective settlers.

People who went to Skenesborough could have three years' free rent. There were two roads, one a good well-known one south to Fort Edward and another from the southeast of the patent from the mouth of Wood Creek to Montreal, expected to be the main post road. Besides these roads there were Wood Creek and East Creek running through the township, both navigable by boats, and boats of fifty tons could come to the town of Cumberland on the west side of the falls at Wood Creek 130 miles away from St. Johns, Canada.

Fish and venison were plentiful and all kinds of provisions could be furnished by the settlers. Agriculture would be the main industry as the land contained limestone and was good for growing grass, flax, hemp, wheat, and other grains. While clearing the land for settling, the new inhabitants could be earning money as three pence per bushel would be paid for wood ashes.

Already at the site was a sawmill. A gristmill would be ready during the summer of 1765. A clergyman would arrive that summer and build a church on the land granted him in the patent. The settlers would have the privilege of choosing their own town officials, also so stated in Skene's papers. Any one interested in settling on Skene's land could apply to Mr. Gaines of New York, a signer of the patent for the 25,000 acres and a merchant of that city.

For a period of ten years then Skene was able to develop his land. Dr. Asa Fitch, historian of Salem, New York, characterized him as "<sup>27</sup>a man of intelligence, wealth and enterprise beyond any other person that was in the country for several years, seriously devoting himself to the settlement and improvement of his township and the development of the resources of the surrounding district. He burned lime, quarried stone, and reared buildings with a character



far more substantial than any other private individual in the province aspired to possess in those days." Philip Skene himself said in December 1770 in a letter to his agent in New York, "28I want only a few Years Idly devoted to make a good estate of it."

People settled in Skenesborough in fair numbers. Although he could have obtained more rent than he did, Philip much preferred to have his tenants work off their rent in settling and improving the land. He was always looking for extra income for them. He expressed great disappointment when he did not receive a contract for making Government ships in his shipyard. One settler to the south complained that Skene allowed his Negroes to work Sundays to get extra money for themselves.

His account books show many transactions with his <sup>29</sup>tenants. Charles Skinner gave a note for a sorrel horse with saddle. John Dewey borrowed on a demand note a bay stallion, six muskrat skins, and two raccoon skins. Some entries were for loans of cash he granted even when he was imprisoned in Hartford. Old soldiers going to Europe for their pensions were loaned money to help them to their destination. An account book that he kept with four Indians — Atian, Toby, Captain, and Joseph — tells of an exchange of corn, brandy, knives, bullets, and provision for venison and muskrat, beaver, and raccoon skins.

His farms were producing sustenance for himself and his tenants. His great barn housed blooded cattle and horses. He intended the horses for a West Indian trade. His mills were running and "plenty did abound."

The year 1771 saw several accomplishments for the growing settlement. Beginning June 5 Philip could charge 20 per cent on proceeds of the post office, according to the commission given him by Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft, Postmasters General of the Northern District of North America on June 1. A red cedar sloop and two passage boats were constructed. A road leading from Skenesborough through White Creek was 20 miles shorter to Albany than one by way of Fort Edward, although it never was a "carriage road."

By 1772 the quarrel between the New Hampshire Grants and New York was raging quite strongly. As a justice of the peace of the county of Albany Skene had been ordered in 1771 to take into custody some people who had dispossessed some New Yorkers near Bennington. Time and distance were contributing factors in the delay of the order's execution. Skene was busy with petitions from the surrounding areas to have Skenesborough made the county seat of the new county of Charlotte carved out of the northern part of Albany County. All but the New Hampshire Grants dissenters agreed that this was the appropriate town but because of this controversy

the Council of New York decided, April 8, 1772, that the Charlotte County Court of Pleas and General Sessions should be held in the home of Patrick Smith in Fort Edward. On April 29, 1772, William Duer, Philip Skene, and Philip Schuyler were appointed judges of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas for this new county.

Philip Skene did not give up easily and on February 2, 1773, the Council of New York made Skenesborough the county town of Charlotte, providing Skene gave 500 acres of land for various public uses to be determined later. This provision Skene himself had written into the petition. On March 17, 1773, the Council decided that 250 acres of the land Skene gave should be used for a minister of the Church of England and proper spots be used for a church, a courthouse, a school, and other public buildings, and the rest be used for a glebe for the public school master and town common. Skene appealed to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in London telling them of this decision. On April 15, 1774, Mr. Bowden was recommended to the Lord Bishop of London for Holy Orders and to be sent to Skenesborough, Col. Skene allowing him £25 a year for a salary.

These plans looked well on paper but they never materialized. Quarrels between the people in the New Hampshire Grants and the settlers in New York continued. Affairs became so serious that New Yorkers appealed to Gen. Haldimand, Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces in New York, for protection. The general refused his aid, for he felt that if troops had to be used to suppress "lawless vagabonds" in such a government as New York no respect would ever be shown it. The Court was removed from the county seat of Skenesborough to the house of Patrick Smith near Fort Edward.

Matters, official and personal, now called Philip to England. His estate could be left securely in the charge of his son Andrew and Philip departed for London in 1774.

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## Skene's Tenants

At present there is no complete roster of the tenants who lived on Skene's lands. Although he made a list covering the years 1759 to 1775, it doubtless was made from memory. The following is a composite of names secured from several sources. Repetitions are evident as variations in spelling seem apparent for several of the names.

Airs,	Childs, Silas	Gould, Thomas
Allen, Parmile	Cline, Jacob	Grainger, Daniel
Anger,	Coon, James	Grainger, Libeous
Aster, John	Culvert, Arthur	Grainger, Peter
Astun, John	Dancy, Samuel	Grainger, Silas
Austin, James	Darby, David Jr.	Grainger, Zacheus
Austin, Maurice	Darby, David Sr.	Grant, John
Bacon, Samuel	Darby, Elisha	Ilarembaker, Joseph
Barker,	Dewey, Samuel	Harris, Nehemiah
Barlow,	Dill, George	Harvey, Nathaniel
Bartholomew, Lemuel	Douglass, John	Harvey, Phineas
Bartholomew, Thazer	Dukey,	Hawley, David
Beacht, Samuel	Elveston,	Hayes, Stephen
Begelo, Honestite	Fleury, John	Higby, William
Beglow, Hasltine	Force, Oborr	Hobart, Aziel
Belknap, Jepe	Force, Timothy	Hobbert, Benjamin
Beverley, David	Fotherington, John	Hobbert, Benoni
Biglow, Samuel	Francisco, Henry	Hockwell, Jacob
Blanchard, Abner	Freeman, John	Hodgs, George
Blanchard, Aziel	Fuller, Aaron Jr.	Holmston, Ephraim
Bogges, Thomas	Fuller, Doc. Aaron Sr.	Holmston, Reuben
Boyle, George	Fuller, Ephraim	Hubert, Samuel
Eoyle, Robert	Fuller, Garsham	Humasastun, Abraham
Brooks, John	Fuller, Henry	Hume, James
Brundage, Daniel	Fuller, Ho. Dr.	Hume, Walter
Buckley, Nicholas	Fuller, Jude	Huffnagh, Micheal
Burroughs, Daniel	Fuller, Mathew	Hungerford, Douel
Burroughs, James	Fuller, Robert	Hunter, David
Burroughs, Jeremiah	Gains, Francis	Hurlburt, Cabel
Burroughs, Matthew	Gearns,	Hutton, William
Campbele, Hugh	Gold, John	Jackson, David
Carp, John Thomas	Gonge, Alexander	Jackson, James
Cheshire, John	Gordon, Robert	Jhan, Mark



Johnson, William  
 Kearby, Abraham  
 Kearty, James  
 Keating, Garret  
 Kellogg, Benjamin  
 Knap, Asial  
 Lenony, John  
 Leonard, Zephona  
 Lockwell, Jacob  
 Lockwell, Levi  
 Lovel, John  
 McAisly, John  
 MacChon,  
 MacDonald, Ronald  
 McFarran, John  
 McFarren, Mory  
 McFarren, Samuel  
 McJensie, John  
 McKensie, Lawrence  
 Manville, Daniel  
 Marchant,  
 Martin, Reuben  
 Martin, Samuel  
 Matorype, Elisha  
 Meachem, Jonathan  
 Miller, Charles  
 Mitchel, Joseph  
 Morgin, Jabesh  
 Moss, Isaac  
 Mrguhart, I.  
 Nales, Elisha  
 Nowlan, Felix  
 Osgood, Aaron  
 Osgood, Nathaniel  
 Osgood, Thomas

Outos, Elisha  
 Pery, Amos  
 Pendock, Bonan  
 Perkins, James  
 Pointer, John  
 Poniel, Felix  
 Powell, Phabn  
 Powers, Simeon  
 Prindle, Joe  
 Prindle, Timothy  
 Prindle, William  
 Prindle, Joel, Jr.  
 Prindle, Joel, Sr.  
 Queen, M.  
 St. John, Nathan  
 Sawyer, Moses Jr.  
 Sawyer, Moses Sr.  
 Searl, Gideon  
 Shepard, John  
 Sine, Robert  
 Skinner, Charles  
 Smith, Edward  
 Smith, John  
 Smith, Victorius  
 Speare, John  
 Spencer, William  
 Stevenson, Andrew  
 Stewart,  
 Stockwell, David  
 Stockwell, Levi  
 Stoddard, James  
 Stoon, Enos  
 Stow, Seth  
 Taun, Silas  
 Terrey, Eli

Thing, William  
 Thomas, Doctor  
 Thomas, Hannah  
 Thomas, John Carp  
 Thomas, John (lame)  
 Thomas, Patrick  
 Thomas, Zachariah  
 Thompson, Dr. Levi  
 Thompson, Wyllys  
 Townsend, John  
 Tozer, Elishama  
 Train, Silas  
 Tubbs, Zebulon  
 Vangetter, John  
 Vanmeer, Jacob  
 Vine, Abenezzer  
 Vine, John  
 Vine, Robert  
 Walch, Samuel  
 Walsh, Josiah  
 Watson, James  
 Watson, John  
 Welch, David  
 Welch, Joseph  
 Wheeler, Ephraim  
 Wilson, John  
 Wilson, Robert  
 Wilson, Thomas  
 Winchel, Soloman  
 Winlone, William  
 Winters, William  
 Winton, William  
 Woodward,  
 Young, Alexander

## Prisoner

The year 1775 started well for Philip Skene. He was on friendly terms with officers in the British army. He knew and visited members of the British government. On this year's visit he was well received in London and presented his views to those in authority. He reported that he had talked with Gen. William Howe before he left America and thought that the General would consent to serve under Gen. Gage and that men in America, who revered Howe's name, would serve with him.

Skene believed a quick show of force in America would put down any thought of resistance. He wrote Lord North that he believed there were enough veterans in England from the last war who could be sent out to treat with the Americans. He listed the regiments in both England and Ireland from which recruits could be taken. They would be better than raw recruits who did not know the country or the manner of fighting that the provincials used. That Philip's judgment was wrong in many instances about the Americans came not from ignorance but from the fact that others did not live up to their principles and pledges as he did.

On January 28 Philip was appointed Lieutenant Governor <sup>30</sup>of the Forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point by George III under the hand of the Earl of Dartmouth with a yearly salary of £200. On February 16 he received the additional <sup>31</sup>appointment of "Inspector into the state of all lands not claimed as private property being within the district of the Province of Quebec and that part of New York which lay on Lake Champlain" with a salary of £300. He succeeded Adolphus Benzell of Crown Point in the latter appointment. Although he was prevented from carrying out the duties of inspector on Lake Champlain by the war, he did work in Canada and suggested settlement on the south side of the Ottawa river.

But fate now turned the tables. Philip set sail for home as soon as he could engage passage, but the ship *Sally* was delayed by contrary winds. When the banks of Newfoundland were reached in early June, news came aboard that Ticonderoga had been seized and his own lands taken. On hearing of this capture Skene flew into a great temper and declared that he would march from Canada with 5,000 men and recapture the area. Seeing the great warmth with which Skene spoke, the captain realized for the first time what an im-

portant person he had on board. Though he raged at the fact he had not been told, the captain decided that the Quakers of Philadelphia would give him a better welcome and he took his ship to that port.

Congress, sitting in that city, knew of Skene's importance in the northern colonies; they knew he was arriving with an appointment as lieutenant governor and could raise troops in America; they knew a lieutenant of the regular army accompanied him with military stores of 70 chests of arms and with money.

Small wonder then that a Congressional Committee, composed of John Adams, Silas Deane, and Thomas Mifflin (later Christopher Gadsden was added) were ordered to meet the ship and search the papers of this "dangerous partisan of administration", though they were instructed to keep silent on private matters in them. John Hancock, President of Congress, himself boarded the ship with the committee amid the crowd of curious that had assembled at the wharf. Telling Philip that they knew of his activities in England and his purpose here in America, the committee demanded his papers. At first Philip attempted to bluff but finally he delivered his box of papers to them, admitting at the same time that he had destroyed the private letters concerning his charter. From the *Sally* he was taken to the new City Tavern with two other passengers, Lt. Moncrief and Mr. Lundy, and kept under a 24 hour guard of eight Philadelphia soldiers while his papers were read.

Knowing that Skene *had little opinion* of their military ability, the Philadelphians thought it well to parade before the tavern for his edification 2,000 troops that had been training. Looking out the window upon this parade, Skene exclaimed: "<sup>32</sup>Well, if the Angel Gabriel had descended from Heaven and reported to me what I now behold I could scarcely have believed it."

Two days after his seizure June 10, Skene was released and "<sup>33</sup>suffered to go at large any where within Eight miles of the City between Delawar & Schuylerkill on his parole of honor not to go without these limits, and that he will hold no correspondence with any person whatever on any political Subject." But on June 27 Congress resolved: "<sup>34</sup>That Gov<sup>r</sup>. Skene be sent under a guard to Weathersfield or Middletown, in the County of Hartford, in Connecticut, there to be confined on his parole, not to go out of bounds prescribed to him by Gov<sup>r</sup>. Trumbull" and again on July 3: "It appearing that Gov<sup>r</sup>. Skene and Mr. Lundy have designs inimical to American liberty, thereupon,

On motion, it is recommended to the delegates of the colony of Pennsylvania to have the order of Congress of the 27 June last, respecting the sending of Gov<sup>r</sup>. Skene to Hartford in Connecticut, immediately carried into execution.



On motion, Resolved, That Mr. Lundy be sent under guard along with Gov<sup>r</sup>. Skene to Hartford, in Connecticut, there to be confined in the same manner as is ordered with respect to Gov<sup>r</sup>. Skene, until further orders from this Congress.

Resolved, That such provision be made for the support of Gov<sup>r</sup>. Skene and Mr. Lundy, as Gov<sup>r</sup>. Trumbull shall think proper, which the Continent will take care to pay."

Silas Deane characterized this Mr. Lundy as "35a specious stupid, profligate fellow" and his breaking his parole and escaping may have been the cause of the harsher treatment given to Philip Skene as a prisoner.

Bitter did this treatment seem to Philip and he railed against it. He declared he would not go, at least not alive. Mr. Ross of the Pennsylvania delegates said perhaps his soul would not go but his body would go where they ordered it. Philip had written to Gov. John Penn of Pennsylvania to help him or have him sent back to England, as they were both servants of the King. But his answer from a fellow governor was only a polite letter asking the nature of his treatment. Silas Deane had assured Skene his treatment would be good and so he agreed to go, writing defiantly, "36Pursuant to the above resolution of the Continental Congress now sitting at Philadelphia, I do hereby promise upon my being released from my confinement under the custody of centries with fixed Bayonets, & in a Guard Room, as I now am, to comply with the above terms."

General Wooster took him as far as New York under a guard of 700 men, as Skene said, but Congress paid Francis Wade and 18 men \$445.65 to take him and Mr. Lundy to New York, where Mr. Lundy escaped. Later Daniel Smith was paid \$133.30 for expenses for guards attending Governor Skene, Major French, and others and the expense of Major French and Mr. Lundy. Philip Skene paid his own expenses during the years of his imprisonment. The 700 men Skene mentioned may have been the soldiers under Gen. Wooster.

In Weathersfield Philip found his son Andrew from Skenesborough and Capt. William de la Place from Ticonderoga. They had just received permission from Congress to remain together in prison in answer to their petition "37 as their society was the only enjoyment their unfortunate positions as prisoners allowed them." Congress further allowed Andrew to reside with his father.

When Philip and Andrew appeared in Middletown where they had chosen to reside, the consternation of the citizens was great. As it happened the day was a fast day and the place was crowded. The citizens thought Skene was breaking parole when he came there without a guard. Many Tories shook hands with the two newcomers and were willing to treat them like gentlemen. This angered the

farmers. Over 400 converged on the spot and demanded their removal. To be orderly they finally chose twelve of their number to act as guards and set Colonel Talbot over the Skenes while Lt. Benj. Henshaw set about to obtain information from the Governor.

Hugh Wallace, a New York merchant and one of the signers of the Skenesborough patent, wrote Skene in August: "<sup>38</sup>It is hard to be obliged to go to a place and not be allowed to stay there." But Gov. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut was able to clear up the situation. His explanation ran thus: Gov. Trumbull had received a letter from Pres. Hancock of Congress dated June 27 that Skene was to be sent under proper guard and kept in Hartford until further orders from Congress. This letter was laid before the General Assembly then sitting at Hartford and they ordered a committee to find Skene suitable lodgings and entertainment in some remote part of the town and allow young Skene to stay with him.

In July Gov. Trumbull received another letter from Pres. Hancock which enclosed the minutes of Congress of June 27 and a letter from Gen. Wooster dated July 20 that said: "<sup>39</sup>You will receive this from Gov. Skene, who is at present residing in Weathersfield or Middletown, within such limits as you shall grant him. At Philadelphia I understood he had eight miles around the city allowed him, perhaps your honor will think it proper to give him the liberty of Hartford, Weathersfield, and Middletown. I have long been acquainted with him, and have ever esteemed him a man of strict honor, and whose word may be depended upon, and would beg of your honor that he may be used with every civility that the nature of the case will permit of."

The next day Gov. Trumbull received orders from the Pennsylvania delegates that had interdelineations which were not in the first orders so that the orders read: Town of Hartford, Weathersfield or in the County of Middletown. After these orders Gov. Trumbull gave instructions that Philip and Andrew be lodged in some remote part of the town of Hartford. Col. Dyer reported that the interdelineations had inadvertently been omitted from the first orders.

While clearing up his actions, Gov. Trumbull pompously added that this was an act of Providence that put Skene in a section where he could not operate "his inimical purposes and designs against the constitutional rights of liberty" but he promised to write Congress to see that Skene was not insulted or abused. This statement could well have been in answer to Silas Deane who had written concerning the treatment afforded Skene: "<sup>40</sup>to a person of any sensibility nothing can be more painful than to be constantly liable to the reflections of having his faith which he pledged, and word of honor, violated before his face." He asked that Skene be removed to some other place as he was on a main road which both armies used, that the country people were naturally inquisitive, and as Skene was very

communicative and judicious and in the secrets of administration, he could find out much information and relay it to the proper places, as Mr. Deane had found when Philip was in Philadelphia. Philip did this very thing and relayed information to Generals Gage and Howe through John Brooks, his agent.

From Hartford Philip, Andrew, and Major French, who had arrived later from Cork with 45 pieces of luggage, were taken to West Hartford where they boarded for about a year at their own expense with the family of Widow Hooker, at the top of Elmwood Hill. Sarah Webster Hooker married Daniel Hooker, a descendent of the famous Rev. Hooker who was so instrumental in the settling of Hartford. She was an ardent patriot like her husband. This home is still standing and now used as a restaurant. In December 1775 Andrew, not being on parole of honor, abetted by his father, escaped from Hartford, got to New York and on board the *Asia*, man-of-war anchored in New York harbor to assist the British in any way possible. From there Andrew reached Canada.

The prisoners were often reviled by the inhabitants as enemies of the colony and Skene narrowly escaped being tarred and feathered by his neighbors at West Hartford for what they deemed his unpatriotic and insulting demeanor.

In June Ensign Moland was prevented from going to Canada on a pass that he had received because he had been seen *talking* to Skene. Fearing he had received messages to people in authority in Canada, the Americans sent En. Moland prisoner to Hartford.

In September Philip wrote Silas Deane: "41The insults I have been liable to here is worse than death to me who never valued it above true liberty. I wish myself in my native country (even New Gate there) would be more preferable than the ills I have borne."

How long and tedious must be days when one has no purpose, no set job but waiting. What boredom must these able-bodied men have felt and how they must have clutched at any incident that would cause a few hours' entertainment. In mid-January Gov. Skene in West Hartford invited Major French, Capt. McKay, Messrs. Ratton and McDermott to ride over the five miles to his place for dinner and an evening of whist. Capt. McKay, drove the sleigh and he had learned well the American custom of shouting a great deal at the horses. This was an excellent way to let off youthful steam also.

After dinner and with Mr. McDermott returned to town, the other men sat down to their game of cards. Shortly they were warned that at least twenty men had gathered at a house across the street ready to attack them. These men had heard the hallooing at the horses, and being of a suspicious nature had believed that this



evening's entertainment had been arranged to gloat over the defeat of Gen. Benedict Arnold and Gen. Montgomery in Canada, that had recently occurred.

Gen Tryon claimed the best account of this came to him from Gov. Skene, a prisoner. This could very well be, for Andrew was in the battle of Quebec and the Skenes were great letter writers.

Determined to defend themselves at all costs, Skene and his guests retreated to an upstairs room while they sent first a Negro servant and later the frightened landlady across the street to gather the news. Finally Capt. Sedgwick of the militia arrived and persuaded the assembly to go home.

There was constant needling on both the prisoners' and local inhabitants' parts. A simple horseback ride could be an occasion for mortification. American militia would try to frighten the prisoners' horses so they would be jounced about. Letters were opened, even though passed and backed by other American committees. Men who spoke to them were arrested on the supposition they were bringing letters to the prisoners. Those free from jail rooms were not allowed to visit those in jails.

Small incidents mushroomed into large ones. After the yearly election of the Connecticut governor, it was customary for the Negroes to elect a governor of their own the following day. The year 1776 was no exception but it was Philip's Black John Anderson who was elected. That night John gave a supper and ball at Mr. Knox's tavern and the assembly made merry until three in the morning.

Suspecting that Philip had had a hand in this affair, a committee waited upon him to question him and incidentally to search his papers again. To them Philip reported that the day before he, Major French, and Mr. McDermott had heard William Williamson and John talking about the election but had thought it was a joke. Philip had given John a half joe (\$8.81) to celebrate election with and the major and Mr. McDermott had added \$2 each. It was not until the next morning that Philip heard of the actual election.

John declared, on his interrogation, that there was no plot or scheme on his part. He had never seen an election of this kind and understanding from a Mr. Harper that there was one each year, he decided to stand for it and promised a treat to the voters. He willingly showed a paper in his possession. The examiners found that Serg. Nearn had written the paper. Questioning brought out the fact that the sergeant had written it at the request of the former Negro Governor Cuff. Mr. Cuff testified that many Negroes had advised him to resign his governorship to John. Many others said there was no formal election, just an appointment by Mr. Cuff which many of

them disapproved of as they wished "no Tory over them." The rest of the money needed for the treat John explained came from his own pocket as he had earned it on the vessels of the lakes and been allowed to keep it. So this crisis passed.

On May 23, 1776, Gov. Skene's parole expired. A new one was tendered him but he refused to sign it and gave one of his own which would allow him to stay within the town of Middletown. Although he was warned that his refusal would cause him to be imprisoned, he stood steadfast and that day was put in jail.

Now that he was actually in jail he could do what he could not when he was on his parole of honor. He could actively work to win people from the American cause to favor the British. One Gordon Whitmore complained that his son, imprisoned for helping British officers to escape, was brain-washed by Gov. Skene and his fellow jail mates. From his prison windows Philip harangued the crowd that gathered to see the prisoners.

Near the place a William Pitkin owned a powder mill. For a time he had to keep a guard over it at night at seven shillings per night as "42 threats had leaked out from Skene and other inimical monsters, that it should be destroyed, if art or money could effect it."

During this time steps were taken on both sides to arrange an exchange of prisoners. The Americans were jealous of their titles and rejected letters not properly addressed. There was even a resolution in Congress to that effect: "43 Resolved that no letters should be received from the enemy unless the rank of the officer to whom it were addressed was placed upon the superscription."

In a first attempt at exchange Gen. Washington sent a flag of truce into Boston to Gen. Gage offering an exchange of Major French for Colonel Parker, Lieutenant Knight of the navy for Captain Scott, and His Excellency Governor Skene for Corporal Cruise. The first two were accepted but the last Gen. Gage "rejected with scorn."

In December 1775 Congress resolved that Gen. Washington be authorized to exchange James Lovell, a member of Congress, for Governor Skene. This General Howe refused as the British had found that Mr. Lovell had been conducting unlawful correspondence as a prisoner. This reply was delayed because it was addressed to George Washington, Esq.

During July a closed meeting between Gen. Washington and Col. Patterson, Adjutant General of the Army under Gen. Howe, took place in Col. Knox's tavern in Philadelphia. During this session the

proper salutations were used and Col. Patterson said he now had authority to exchange Mr. Lovell for Gov. Skene. Gen. Washington replied that since the suggestion had originally come from Congress and that it had been refused, he would have to consult that body before replying.

During July and August 1776 details were worked out and on September 21 Gen. Howe wrote Gen. Washington that although it would take time for Mr. Lovell to reach New York from Halifax, he hoped Gov. Skene would be granted his liberty without delay, since neither of the two persons was connected with military service.

Gen. Washington then wrote to Gov. Trumbull in Connecticut that an exchange of Brig. Gen. Lord Sterling for Gov. Montfort Browne had been made and requested that Skene and Browne be notified of the exchange and be properly escorted to headquarters, under parole, of course.

On September 23, Governor Trumbull notified Skene in a formal note that he had been exchanged and would be set at liberty the next Tuesday. Thomas Ensign, keeper of the jail in Hartford, was instructed to release Skene immediately so he could prepare himself to set out for headquarters. Finally Skene was transferred to a British man-of-war in the Hudson River and on October 7, 1776, was again a free man.

In New York for the next two months he was associated with General Howe, who said later in an affidavit for Skene "44he joined the army under my command and acted with great zeal to His Majesty's service as Lieutenant Governor of Crown Point." One of these acts was to inspect the prisons and churches in which prisoners were held. He "manifested great dissatisfaction at the ill usage of the prisoners."

On December 28, 1776, Philip wrote Gov. Trumbull that he would set out for Europe in a few days and hoped to be at Crown Point early in the spring.

While Philip was serving this year and three months of imprisonment in Connecticut, crises were occurring in his settlement at Skenesborough.



## Skenesborough Under The Rebels

When Philip Skene went to London in 1774 to obtain the appointment as lieutenant governor, he left Skenesborough in the care of his son. Andrew, on graduating from King's College (now Columbia) in 1772, decided to make his life work the development of his father's estate. Philip was proud of him and confidently left the estate, family, and dependents in his care. Early in the next year, 1775, the crisis occurred between the American Coloninists and the British Government.

New Englanders had determined that Fort Ticonderoga should be taken by the Americans if hostilities broke out. The Massachusetts Committee of Safety authorized Benedict Arnold to take this fort but did not give him any troops to carry out the capture. In April Benedict Arnold reported that at Skenesborough there were three or four brass cannons, a fort in a ruinous condition with not more than fifty men in it, a large number of small arms, quite a number of stores, and a schooner of 70 or 80 tons (really 40) which could be taken easily within an hour.

Scouts of the Green Mountain Boys also went to Skenesborough to see what resources were there. Andrew had told Gorham Beach, who was visiting at Skenesborough House, that his father was returning to America with a commission which empowered him to raise 1,000 men and with plans to strengthen the forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga.

When the Green Mountain Boys and Ethan Allen decided to take Fort Ticonderoga, they knew boats would be needed to cross Lake Champlain. What could better serve the purpose than the schooner that Philip Skene owned and the different sized scows he used to haul freight. Two young lads, James Wilcox and Joseph Tyler, overheard the plans. Knowing that one of the scows with iron ore was near by, manned by the Negroes who dug the ore at Cheever and carried it to Skenesborough, they slipped out a window and went to the lake. There they persuaded the Negroes they wanted to go on a squirrel hunt. Unsuspecting, the Negroes allowed the lads on board, only to find their boat taken for another purpose.

When Benedict Arnold, Ethan Allen, and others planned the taking of Fort Ticonderoga, they sent Capt. Samuel Herrick

(Hearick) with a force of 30 men to take the schooner at Skenesborough. On May 9, 1775, the capture took place. There are several versions of this affair. One runs that Capt. Herrick, who did not know Andrew by sight, asked for Major Skene and was directed to the woods where Andrew was hunting. On determining that he was Andrew, Capt. Herrick took him and all the other members of the household prisoner. This was supposed to have occurred in the afternoon.

Dr. Asa Fitch, historian of Salem, reported another capture story. Capt. Barnes of Salem set out with a force with the same purpose in mind — capturing Skenesborough. The men left Salem in the afternoon desiring to reach their objective at night unseen. This force reached Skenesborough House at dusk, but a rifle shot announced their arrival. Running on they effected a capture of the inmates.

To whichever group it was goes the doubtful triumph of thoroughly ransacking the household, drinking the contents of the cellar, and carrying off whatever they could lay their hands on. This included even a small Negro girl Sylvia owned by Miss Elizabeth Skene. To justify this theft, the Americans claimed Philip Skene was her father and they did a service in taking her to Salem. Here she lived to be over 80 years old.

In the cellar of Skenesborough House, the ransacking men came upon the vault in which Philip had laid his wife. The outside covering of the coffin was a lead coating carefully soldered. This they ripped off to make bullets. Disclosed inside was a fine pine coffin of excellent workmanship. Inside this was the body of Mrs. Skene which they removed to the garden and buried after stealing the jewels which had been placed upon her.

To condone this sacrilegious act the men made up the story that Philip had placed his wife in this vault so that each month he could go to the cellar, place a pen in her hand, and have her sign an "annuity paper". Another account says he was to receive an annuity as long as she "remained above ground". There was no annuity. Katharine Heyden Skene had been willed her uncle's estate outright. How would Philip have opened the coffin each month? Gruesome as it is, this story is told over and over whenever accounts of Whitehall history are written. A man living at that time in Skenesborough told Dr. Asa Fitch that Philip Skene had promised to take his wife's body back to Ireland.

Some small measure of revenge was visited upon soldiers who later stood guard at Skenesborough House. One young lad begged to be relieved of his guard duty. When questioned for his reasons, he said a lady walked up and down the garden and when she came

to a certain spot disappeared. When informed that this spot was the grave of Mrs. Skene, the poor lad went into a dead faint. The soldier who relieved him saw no ghost.

Whoever was the victor at the capture of Skenesborough, Benedict Arnold sent word to Congress that Major Skene, his schooner, and eight pieces of cannon had been captured, and the schooner sent down the lake. But the schooner, now christened the *Liberty*, did not sail immediately. Two officers, Capt. Oswald and Capt. Brown, followed Benedict Arnold from Massachusetts, recruiting men as they went. It was with their help that the schooner was finally sent off on May 11, arriving at Ticonderoga May 13, and at Crown Point May 14. At Ticonderoga Benedict Arnold had her fitted up with four carriage and eight swivel guns and went down the lake to take the British sloop *Enterprise*, May 18, 1775, at St. John's

Andrew Skene, his aunt Elizabeth, his two sisters, Mary and Katharine, and John Brooks, deputy surveyor of His Majesty's woods, were sent under guard over 200 miles to Salisbury, Connecticut. The road south from Skenesborough, either by Skene's road to Salem or by Wood Creek, was none too good. The women were so badly jolted in the ox-cart when riding that they walked some of the way. An overnight stay was at Mrs. Philip Schuyler's home. Much later Philip Skene thanked her for the hospitality she had given his family. By May 18 they had arrived at Salisbury. The men were taken on to Hartford.

The Assembly at Hartford, Connecticut, wanted nothing to do with the capture of this family until they heard from Congress. Andrew formally petitioned that all of them be allowed to return to Skenesborough. The Assembly of Connecticut, receiving no answer from Congress, who in turn had sent to New York for information, finally agreed to allow the women to return. John Brooks was to go back to Skenesborough to take charge of the estate. Under the care of Capt. John Bigelow of Hartford and Oliver Wolcott and Elisha Sheldon of Salisbury, the Skene ladies retraced the route to Skenesborough and went on to Quebec. Benedict Arnold was their host for one night's lodging at Crown Point, June 23. Friends in Canada received them and a Thomas Dunn loaned them 35 pounds on Miss Elizabeth Skene's giving acknowledgment to Mr. Cramake who she supposed loaned it. Later John Bigelow's widow received from Congress \$151 for this escort.

On July 5, 1775, Philip Schuyler, who had been made commander of the New York Department that included Lake Champlain on June 15, sent this report to Congress from Ticonderoga: "45A set of people in this country, calling themselves a Committee-of-War, by what authority I know not, have taken Col. Skene's forge and farm into possession under pretense of working it for the public, but it



turned out to embezzle everything. I have given orders for them to quit it and to restore it to Col. Skene's agent or overseer, that no disgrace may be brought to our cause by such lawless proceedings."

Benedict Arnold wrote Congress that he knew nothing of the plundering of Skenesborough but he would not tolerate any such actions. The story runs in many histories that Gen. Arnold rode Philip's white horse in the Battle of Saratoga, but in reality he rode a brown horse.

The estate at Skenesborough was put in the care of Capt. Noah Lee of Castleton and Elisha Phelps. John Brooks returned from Salisbury and was Skene's agent for a time. However, the people of Skenesborough did not feel kindly toward John. He acted as a spy, sending messages to and getting them from Canada and transferring them to Philip Skene in Hartford. He was forced to leave the settlement.

Philip gave one Patrick Langan power of attorney. During the rest of 1775 Mr. Langan tried to keep account of the estate. One of Capt. Lee's soldiers had a gun of Skene's. Capt. Herrick had Skene's double barrelled gun, gift from a friend in England, which Herrick would not give up. Philip's pair of pistols with his name engraved were on board the *Liberty*. Col. Warner carried away a canoe. Capt. Dickerson had taken a Negro to Pittsfield.

Iron, coal and boards were counted after a fashion and money for them sent to Skene in prison. In December Patrick Langan sent a list of items to Congress with Skene as creditor: "<sup>46</sup>two batteaus, 42 and 52 feet respectively with their sails; barn burned by guards of the prisoners, windows broken, a large canoe, and the two houses at Point Catherine burned."

In September Philip Skene acknowledged a payment of \$250 from the estate and expressed his gratitude for having his property protected. He claimed much more was due and he needed it — "my family being great". Later in the year he scolded in a letter to Philip Schuyler that his Negro John had been sent in bad weather with messages to his sister and daughters. "<sup>47</sup>I would not have ventured the person of the Negro to the inclement weather."

During the summer of 1775 Paul Yeats in command at Skenesborough kept the sawmill running. The smallest logs brought in were two feet at the butt and it would saw logs 27 feet long. The mill kept two batteaus busy getting logs and several fetching planks.

Early in 1776 Congress decided that some action should be taken to delay the British who were constructing ships on Lake Champlain. Consequently Generals Thomas Gates, Benedict Arnold, and Philip

Schuyler were ordered to provide the vessels, the "Navy", for this purpose. The work of supervision fell to the lot of the resourceful and energetic Benedict Arnold.

By July 8, eight carpenters were sent to Skenesborough to repair vessels in the harbor there. On July 10, 65 blacksmiths and 13 more shipwrights had arrived. On July 19, one new gundelo was sent down the lake to be outfitted at Ticonderoga followed by the second on July 20.

Gen Gates was dissatisfied with the speed of the progress and sent Col. Cornelius Wyncoop to hurry the ship building along. By this time 29 more carpenters had arrived. Man power was plentiful but materials were hard to come by. One time bellows for the forge were needed. Another time it was nails, or axes, or cordage.

On July 24 Gen. Arnold made one of his flying trips of inspection to Skenesborough. He reported to Congress that 30 carpenters from Connecticut had arrived to start the galleys and 100 more from Pennsylvania and Massachusetts were expected. From the Rhode Island group 12 had had themselves inoculated for small pox and were forbidden to arrive. He needed 300 sailors for the ships but had only 70. He needed three or four experienced commanders for the row galleys and four or five for the gundelos besides gunners.

One gundelo each was sent off on July 23 and 24 and another July 27. Two more were on the stocks under construction. By August 3, three galleys had been set up. Small pox arrived August 19 and it was not until September 1 that the first row galley was launched, although the reconditioned row galley *Lee* had been sent down the lake August 31.

The last of the gundelos was sent on its way September 3. By this time boards were arriving steadily from the mill at Fort Anne and the three galleys were planked by September 14. Two of these had already been named the *Congress* and the *Trumbull*. These two were sent off by the last of the month but the last one, the *Gates*, didn't get off until October 3, too late to be outfitted and used in the Battle of Vadour. As it was, guns from the *Liberty* were used to outfit the *Trumbull*.

From Skenesborough construction, to outfitting at Ticonderoga, to rendezvous at Crown Point — the Navy assembled to pit its strength against the might of the British. This group of ships, built mainly after the Declaration of Independence was the first fleet to see action after the original colonies declared themselves an independent country. The boats constructed in Skenesborough were named for the nation's leaders and the carpenters' home states and cities.

The first naval force in the United States consisted of eight gundelos: *Philadelphia*, *New York*, *Jersey*, *Providence*, *New Haven*, *Spitfire*, *Boston*, *Connecticut*; five row galleys: *Congress*, *Washington*, *Trumbull*, *Gates*, *Lee*; one sloop *Enterprise*; three schooners; *Liberty*, *Royal Savage*, *Revenge*.

Only fifteen of these vessels were in the Battle of Valcour. The *Liberty* was away from the fleet after provisions and the *Gates* was still being outfitted at Ticonderoga. Of the seventeen vessels in the fleet thirteen were constructed and one remodeled at Skenesborough. Of the fifteen that took part in the Battle of Valcour, eleven were constructed and one remodeled at Skenesborough. The *Enterprise* and *Royal Savage* had been captured from the British in 1776; the *Revenge* was constructed at Ticonderoga.

The lumber for these vessels was sawn in mills of Philip Skene at Skenesborough and Fort Anne and much of the iron forged in his bloomery at Skenesborough. It was this fleet created to a large extent with the resources of Philip Skene's settlements that, though defeated, bought a year of valuable time for the Americans and allowed them time to prepare for the British invasion from Canada.

Until the British arrived in 1777, Skenesborough, at the head of lake navigation and an important crossroads, was a busy place. Supplies for Fort Ticonderoga were shipped through its harbor. When the American sailors and soldiers fled from the British and burned Crown Point in 1776, refugees fled south to Skenesborough. With the advent of the British Army the following year, 1777, many Americans fled from the area while Loyalists poured in to live in the houses thus abandoned for the duration. A small military force was kept at the place, which fled south when the British appeared in the harbor July 6, 1777.



## Follower of the British Army

Shortly after being exchanged as a prisoner of war by the Americans, Philip Skene returned to England early in 1777 for a short stay. Believing he could serve his country best by assisting Gen. John Burgoyne in his divisive invasion of the United States from the north, planned in detail in England 3,000 miles away, Philip and Andrew sailed to Quebec. From there they went up Lake Champlain until they caught up with the British Army at Crown Point the latter part of June.

At Ticonderoga the Americans had been preparing a warm welcome for the enemy coming from the north. They had strengthened the fort. They had collected supplies and they had built a boom and chain across the lake between forts Ticonderoga and Independence. Unluckily they had overlooked Mount Defiance as it reared above them to the southwest and from it the British were soon looking down on them, having scaled the mountain on foot dragging a cannon behind them. American plans had gone awry.

At midnight July 5, 1777, American doctors and soldiers were routed from their beds and ordered to fill the boats with the sick, provisions, and ammunition. By 3 a. m. they set out for Skenesborough in five small ships and over 200 batteaux, accompanied by Col. Long of the New Hampshire Regiment and 600 soldiers.

Up the long narrow way of the lake, variously called Wood Creek, South Bay, Drowned Lands, and Lake Champlain they sailed and rowed through the beautiful clear moonlight and on into a bright shimmering day. Believing themselves safe from the enemy because of the boom, they sang, listened to the music of the fife and drum, and tested the "medicinal wine" they carried for the sick. They could lean out and almost touch the rocks and steep cliffs in the "thick impenetrable forest." Twelve hours later they reached the harbor of Skenesborough, supposedly a safe haven.

Hardly two hours had passed before they were dismayed to see the British gun boats entering the harbor with the flagship *Royal George* looming behind them with its great sails almost touching the rock walls on either side; other ships were behind it. A few well directed shots had broken the boom and chain and General Burgoyne

was on his way after the Americans with Philip Skene on board the ship to direct its course through the passages so well-known to him.

Panic ensued among the Americans. No one thought to cut back to the steep rocks and fire down on the British from the sides. The batteaux had to be gotten around the falls across the 300 yard portage, the sick had to be helped, and what belongings they could save hastily secured. The officers tried to stem the retreating tide but could do nothing and soon joined it themselves. Some of the batteaux were soon racing up Wood Creek and the soldiers were running along the path with those in the rear lending them wings with the cry, "March on! The Indians are on our heels." They were followed by a force from the British ships who had rapidly crossed West mountain in an attempt to cut the Americans off. Col. Hill and 132 of his 9th Regiment followed Col. Long to Fort Anne where they engaged in a skirmish in which the British were being routed when the Americans' ammunition gave out. The British 21st Regiment later occupied the blockhouse there.

Back in Skenesborough harbor the five small American vessels put up a spirited resistance but could not hold out for long. Soon, according to the *London Gazette* and the *Journal of the British Army*, the sloop *Enterprise* was burned, the galley *Gates* and schooner *Revenge* were blown up and burned, the scow and other small boats loaded with ammunition and provisions were destroyed, and the galley *Turmbull* and schooner *Liberty* were taken. And that was as one of the British soldiers exultantly said the "48end of the irresistible naval armament built last year."

The fire from the boats burned the sawmill and iron works, and the remaining batteaux. One eye witness said, "49the trees and all up the side of the hanging rock had caught fire as well as the top of a lofty hill."

General Burgoyne was delighted with his successes so far. The English under Gen. Frazer and the Hessians under Gen. Riedesel had marched to Skenesborough by way of Hubbardton, scattering the Rebels on the way, the fleet had been defeated, and the fleeing Americans trounced on the way to Fort Anne. He ordered what was known as a "feu-de-joi" to be held the following Sunday, July 13, to thank God for the victories. At Crown Point, Ticonderoga, Skenesborough, Castleton, and the camp of Col. Breyman church services were held in the morning. No unnecessary work was allowed during the day. At night the great guns and those on the ships were fired and were answered by the small arms of the army. Rain prevented the striking of tents and the proposed troop formations.

Capt. Carter of the artillery took his gunboats back to Ticonderoga and became busy in carrying the artillery up to Lake George.

It was not until July 15 that the gunboats reached the lake, as wagons had to be made to carry them across the portage. The *Royal George*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Commodore* stayed in Skenesborough Harbor a few days to collect the heavy baggage of the soldiers which they could not carry now that they would not be using boats. Each officer was urged to take only what could be carried in a knapsack, following the plan that Lord Howe used back in 1758.

At this time Gen. Burgoyne must have made the decision to stay at Skenesborough and go south from there. He had to wait for provisions and animals with equipment for transport before proceeding. Many writers have conjectured that this three weeks' delay was engineered by Philip Skene who wanted a road built across his property. If this were so, we are indebted to him, as this delay was one of a series of events that helped win the victory at Saratoga. There was already a road of sorts to Fort Anne along Wood Creek. The British did not build a new one; they succeeded only in clearing it enough for the army to go through, building some bridges across the ravines, and partially clearing the creek of the trees the Americans had felled across it. Skene's choice of a route south to Albany had been through Salem, the most direct and the fastest.

There was also the matter of the New Englanders. In 1776 when the American prisoners from the battle of Valcour came home on their paroles of honor, they sang the praises of the British who had treated them so humanely. The New Hampshire Grants people had been looking forward to a new colony with Skenesborough as its capitol. The New England provincials after the defeat at Skenesborough went home instead of following the American forces to the south. Obtaining the loyalty of these people of New England was an important part of the British plan. If the army retreated to Ticonderoga, Gen. Burgoyne believed these New Englanders would not support his forces. Since the road to Canada was very direct, it was reasonable to suppose that it would not take long to obtain horses from there. Gen. Burgoyne did not dream that two-thirds of these horses would be stolen before they ever reached Skenesborough.

If Gen. Burgoyne had followed on to Fort Anne and Fort Edward, he might have overtaken the Americans and prevented their scorched earth policy. But how could he go through the forest whose rough trails had been filled with fallen trees? What would carry the artillery and what provisions would they have, since the Americans had driven all the animals they could before them and taken all the provisions of the fields? The lack of sustenance for both men and animals was a leading factor in Burgoyne's defeat. He lacked horses which he could not be supplied with at Skenesborough.

Even after he arrived at Fort Edward on July 30, he was obliged to wait until August 15 for the arrival of his heavy artillery and



ammunition from Lake George. There was a lack of boats on Lake George and he would have been still nearly as far from Fort Edward and the navigable Hudson as he was at Skenesborough and over fully as difficult a country.

Gen. Burgoyne's reputation of enjoying a good time followed him to America. Madame Riedesel gave a detailed account of life in this British expeditionary force but she does not tell of any wild parties nor are any mentioned in any diaries of the period. The women who followed the army were wives of the British and Hessian soldiers. It is doubtful that Gen. Burgoyne would have hobnobbed with the local belles.

Once again Philip Skene was in his own home in Skenesborough. This time he had an honored guest, for Skenesborough House, July 8, became the headquarters for Gen. Burgoyne. Although the saw mill and iron works had been destroyed, his tenants and Negroes were still in the settlements, and the mills at Fort Anne were still standing.

There were many changes, for now an army occupied his farm. On the west side of the creek the British Right Brigade extended from the rock near the woods to the fort. The Dragoons of Gen. Riedesel, the German leader, secured the flank in the height in the wood. The second British Brigade occupied the fort and five companies of the 24th Regiment camped in back of the fort as reserves.

On the east side of the creek Philip's long stone barn, one of his prize possessions, was spoiled by loopholing. Specht's Brigade formed to the north with the newly fortified barn in its center. The Regiment of Hesse formed on the right of Skenesborough House nearer the lake and extended on the left to the Brigade of Specht. Both of these commands maintained a picquet or guard in the barn, and on top of Skene mountain was another picquet of 100 men. The fort and the fortified barn were to be used as places to receive prisoners.

On July 10 Gen. Fraser's troops came in from Hubbardton and took the right wing, while the German troops went up East Bay to Carver's Falls where the Hesse Hanau already were located. Some continued to Castleton. The Brunswick troops of Gen. Riedesel encamped on Castleton River. The Hessians cut a road to the Poultney River below where it joins the Castleton River and built a bridge across it. The reasons for this construction were to prevent communication between Fort No. 4 and Albany by way of Castleton, to afford protection to the loyal inhabitants, to frighten the disloyal, and to protect the hospital at Hubbardton.

These were busy days for Philip Skene. On July 12, 1777, Gen. Burgoyne appointed him as Commissary to administer the Oath of

Allegiance, and to grant Certificates of Protection to the inhabitants who wished to remain loyal to the Crown. On July 15 he wrote Lord Dartmouth an account of affairs so far. He reported that the Rebels, or the Rebelers as they were commonly called, were having a hard time. The Americans had no faith in their officers nor the officers in their men. The wooded country was hard for the British to work in and they had to work by detachments. He thought his opinion of the countrymen had been correct. They had been flocking to the British side ever since Gen. Burgoyne's Manifesto; the Indians were in the best order he had ever seen them, and the inhabitants were free from plunder.

On the same day July 15 Philip and Gen. Riedesel, whose assistance he had requested, went to the Common in Castleton where Skene received the Oaths of Allegiance of the citizens. In keeping with the famous Proclamation he emphasized that first consideration would be given to those who took the Oath of Allegiance and signed the declaration.

Those who refused to sign were to <sup>50</sup>remain unmolested provided they strictly comply with the conditions of the Manifesto." A list from each township divided into two groups those who were compelled to sign and those who signed voluntarily. Four hundred inhabitants took the Oath.

Besides this a count was to be made of all the horses, horned cattle, wagons, and carts in each township and all mills and the grain to grind in them. Such men as Roger Stevens of Pittsfield and David Remington of Castleton assisted in bringing in carts and teams and on the same day received a pass to go through the German posts.

Gov. Morris of New York wrote to the Council of New York: <sup>51</sup>"The Grants are in a very delicate situation. Skene is courting them with golden offers. He has already gained many, and many more are compelled to submission. There are not a few warm advocates of the British Government among them. At present it is of infinite importance to get as many of these people as possible to move their families and affects, particularly their teams and provisions, from the immediate vicinity of Burgoyne's Army. Warner is their leader, and if he is disgusted, depend upon it, he will draw after him in the present circumstances, a very large train, for, disagreeable as it may be, to tell or hear the truth, yet a truth it is, that very many of these villians only want a New England reason, or if you like the expression better, a plausible pretext, to desert the American States, Vermont among the rest. The enemy will be able to make immense advantages of it, and they will hardly fail of so doing. Skene is at hand to flatter them with being a separate province, and which will weigh more, to give them assurances of being confirmed in their titles, howsoever acquired. For God's sake, let

us take care what we do. By throwing this people into the enemy's arms, we supply them with what they most need, and cannot obtain without this imprudence — to do this, with the greatest advantages in view, would not be very wise."

Those who took the oath were given a certificate and instructed to wear a white paper in their hats but were permitted to return immediately to their respective corps in the Rebel army. Many did just this and reported on their neighbors. Others who might have stayed loyal were punished by Col. Warner and the Rebels.

With a great deal of effort 50 teams of oxen were gathered. Col. Warner learned of this and attacked the group, driving off the cattle, plundering the Loyalists, and in some cases making them prisoners. Gen. Riedesel wanted to protect these people as the Proclamation had promised but Gen. Burgoyne delayed in allowing him to put his plan in action.

The loyalty of many of the people in the American Revolution was determined by the forces that were closest to them, the American or the British. This was not confined to the New England area alone. The "rebel" New Englanders were still busy collecting supplies and as early as July 17 Gen. Schuyler foretold an expected raid on Bennington because the loyal Rebels had about depleted the land and the British had to live from that land.

On reading the accounts of individual actions during the Revolution, one finds over and over again evidences of the friendliness of the opposing leaders among themselves and the desire of both sides to find some way to stop the unnatural action of brother against brother. This occurred between Philip Schuyler and Philip Skene, friends before and after the war. On July 19 Philip Skene sent a representative to Gen. Schuyler in the person of young Cilly, Col. Cilly's son, asking for an appointment with Gen. Schuyler, for he knew that the General was as anxious for peace as he was.

This Jonathan Cilly was the son of Joseph Cilly, a Colonel of the First New Hampshire Regiment. The boy had been captured at Ticonderoga and taken to Gen. Burgoyne. When Philip Skene discovered who the boy was, the lad was treated in great style, given clothing and a horse, and sent with the peace feeler and copies of the Proclamation.

Gen. Schuyler rather stiff-neckedly but very correctly replied that under the circumstances he could not take action on such a letter since Gen. Burgoyne, the head of the army, was at Skenesborough from whence the letter came. He could treat with only the recognized head of the army on such a matter. Skene evidently did not try again.



During the three weeks of the British occupation of Skenesborough, work was progressing as rapidly as the soldiers could work in the unaccustomed woods. Paths were hacked through the many trees felled over the road and creek. Bridges and corduroy roads were built to allow the men to get across the swampy area. Gen. Burgoyne himself spent two days inspecting conditions in and about Fort Anne. On his return he ordered a day's delay in getting the provisions and tents ready. On July 23 Gen. Fraser with the advance corps marched for Fort Anne. On the 24th the 43rd Shropshire Regt. of Foot moved out; on the 25th General Quarters were beaten, the tents were struck and loaded into the batteaux and the troops were marched for Fort Anne which they reached two days later, a distance of 14 miles. On the 24th the Hessians marched in from Castleton to the Landing Place and on the 25th to Skenesborough and the next day on after the British. Large trees were still over the creek and the turns were so narrow that boats must move only in single file. From Fort Anne a road had to be cut as the heavy cannon couldn't be taken over the old road. Major Irving with about 50 English, 50 German, and 50 Provincials was left at Skenesborough for a time.

Philip remained in Skenesborough after the army moved south. As Surveyor of His Majesty's Woods, he intended to return to Canada to work. To prevent supplies from falling into the Rebels' hands, he sent to Ticonderoga all the implements that belonged to the forge or iron works with about 20 tons of bar iron.

But fortune ordered differently from Philip's plans. He received a letter from Lt. Col. Kingston, Adjutant General, urging him to go to Gen. Burgoyne at once. On his way to Fort Edward he ordered "one of the compleatest Saw Mills in America" on his estate near Fort Anne to be burned with 7,000 plank that the enemy might not get in possession of them. He was appointed to act as commissioner to administer Oaths of Allegiance and to grant Certificates, the same position that he had held at Skenesborough.

Desperate for supplies for his army and animals alike, Gen. Burgoyne planned a raid on the storehouse at Bennington, just as Gen. Schuyler had predicted he would back on July 17. Here there were graneries, large herds of cattle, wheel carriages, and horses in large numbers. For this expedition a force consisting mainly of the Hessians was chosen. They went in the rainy August weather loaded down with their heavy equipment and would not even discard their knapsacks, as Philip suggested, on entering an active engagement. Philip was ordered to follow Lt. Col. Baum and lend what assistance he could. On August 16 Lt. Col. Baum sent him to St. Coix near Bennington for stores. While he was there, a corps of Hessians was defeated in a small engagement. The Americans took what plunder they could and in this manner Philip lost two horses and ready cash. This proved a hindrance for again he was paying

his own way, as he had done back in 1776, and he was forced to accept a gratuity from Gen. Burgoyne, a fact that he had to explain thoroughly later when he applied for redress in his fortunes.

Lt. Col. Breyman was ordered to Lt. Col. Baum's aid. The mud was deep, carts were overturned, the way was lost, and the horses were weak from lack of food. Lt. Col. Breyman finally reached St. Coix, near Bennington, where Skene was awaiting him and they set out for Baum's camp. A short ways in front of the Hessian force was a group of Provincials. Philip recognized them as a group of people to whom he had administered the British Oath of Allegiance but a few days before. He shouted to them to wait. For answer they raised their guns and fired at the Hessians. The contest that ensued followed the pattern of former engagements. This time the Americans were retreating but the Hessians' powder gave out. Philip rushed to one of the wagons, cut off the horses and dashed after ammunition. This action was observed by the Americans and a story later circulated that Skene fled for his life. He was singled out and shot at deliberately to be killed and was reported dead. However he was back in 14 minutes with gun powder and cannister shot in front of him on the horse, but both Americans and Hessians were retreating, leaving the heavy guns behind them. Philip wrote later to Mr. Finley, merchant in Quebec, that if the Germans had done their duty and followed the victory that he left, the British Army would have been easy.

The army went back to Fort Edward where Gen. Burgoyne rather philosophically accepted the defeat. During the rest of the campaign Philip remained with Burgoyne's staff while his son Andrew served with Gen. Fraser's Rangers. Philip Skene disagreed in policy with Gen. Burgoyne. The Capitulation at Saratoga was a case in point. Philip believed the army could be saved by withdrawing northward. He urged Gen. Burgoyne to wait in signing the papers until scouts could be sent to Gen. Howe and Gen. Clinton, and Gen. Burgoyne agreed to delay five days. Lt. Pemberton was dispatched with messages to Generals Howe and Clinton. However, stronger powers with the threat of another battle forced Gen. Burgoyne to sign the Capitulation immediately.

Philip was the last to sign the Capitulation which he did in this manner: <sup>53</sup>Philip Skene, a poor follower of the British army. When Gen. Gage found that Skene was a citizen in the army acting without pay from that army, he allowed him to go to Cambridge where the British army was sent, at his own path and in his own time. Again as in 1776 indignant citizens said he was out of the bounds of his parole and he was turned back from Albany where some of his effects were taken. He went through some of the New England country, Springfield and Hartford. People protested, not knowing he had been given permission by Gen. Gates. On this trip

he loaned money to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Reaching Cambridge he was allowed to hire the best house in the place. He had desired to go quickly to Europe. He wrote friends that he would not have gone to Cambridge in the first place if he had not thought he was to be exchanged immediately for Mr. Fell and be able to get his two daughters and sister from Canada to England. On May 21 he was given a pass on his parole to go within the limits subscribed by the British officers.

However he had a long time to wait. Philip waited out this imprisonment much more patiently and quietly than he had the one in 1775-76. He helped soldiers and Loyalists in their financial embarrassments, he sent money to the Widow Hooker with whom he had boarded in the past imprisonment, he wrote letters. In one he explained that he was enjoying the blessings of good health, that he believed man's happiness came from within, and that honor was an important thing in life. This attitude he was to keep during the rest of his life, accepting his position when he realized it could not be changed. Before Gen. Burgoyne went to Europe Skene asked for and received a letter from him in Andrew's behalf. Andrew in his regular army position was the second oldest lieutenant in Gen. Burgoyne's army and in line for promotion.

In May 1778 Gen. Burgoyne returned to England. On June 15, Philip received a pass to take his servant and horse with him and on June 22 he and several other British officers and soldiers were sent to New York under a flag to truce.

Sometime in October Philip sailed for England, where again he became a petitioner of His Majesty's Government.



## Petitioner

Philip Skene returned to England the latter part of 1778 after his second American imprisonment. During May and June of 1779 he was under orders from the House of Commons as a witness in the investigation of Gen. Burgoyne's campaign but his testimony was not taken. As he was still on his parole of honor and unexchanged, he could not take part in any military activities.

When the news of the confiscation of his lands in America, October 27, 1779, was authenticated, Philip began a long and exhaustive campaign, not for reimbursement but for compensation for loss of income and actual property expended for the use of the British army. Other men in like positions and even lower in rank had had their pay with rations, forage, bat money, and other sums. Philip had lost everything, even rent from his tenants, for he had remitted four years of their payments because of the abuses the Indians had committed during the British occupancy of Skenesborough. He had supported himself and others from his own funds during the years of 1775-1778 throughout his two imprisonments.

During these years of waiting for compensation, he stayed in London at his sister Elizabeth's lodging house at Five Fields, Chelsea, and at the home of such friends as William Fitzmaurice at Pall Mall.

An extraordinary one-man letter-writing campaign occupied Skene's time. Over the years he asked for affidavits, thanked those who gave information, urged correction of misinformation, and sought every scrap of aid he could find. These letters went to Americans across the ocean, to lords, to captains, to sergeants, to friends in all walks of life. The final result was a memorial to the King through the proper channels asking for his back salary as lieutenant governor of Ticonderoga and Crown Point and payment for items of sustenance he had furnished the British Army. This paper was accompanied by the affidavits so laboriously compiled.

Philip held this memorial until proof was secured that the lands at Skenesborough could not be saved for him. Even the 500 acres, holdings of the women of his household on the west side of Wood Creek, were lost.

The 5th and 6th Articles of the Peace ratified between America and Great Britain stated that the confiscated lands of the British

subjects in America should be restored to them. After this ratification on July 15, 1784, Philip wrote an open letter to the inhabitants of Skenesborough saying he would return to America in the fall. Now that peace had come, past differences should be wiped out. He would cancel all debts and would start again the iron works and mills. He spoke especially of his work for Vermont interests.

On July 16 he wrote Mr. Touzer of Skenesborough saying that he wished to become a citizen of the United States, that he was under no obligation to any country, and that he had a right to return. He begged Mr. Touzer to convince his neighbors that Skene would contribute his share to the welfare and good of the country. These two letters may never have been sent, but one to Gov. George Clinton of New York, written on July 17, containing similar information, is in the Clinton papers. For some reason the 5th and 6th Articles of the Peace did not apply to Skenesborough.

Convinced finally that he had lost everything in America and could not return, Philip entered the final stage of his memorializing. First he appealed to the commissioners who heard the cases of the American Loyalists. They decided that Philip Skene because of his great losses in America, his great services to Government, and his large family, should have an allowance amounting at least to the half pay of a colonel. This may be the basis for reported statements that he was a half-pay officer. From October 10, 1784, he received an annuity of 180 pounds.

Sir William Howe, Lord Jeffrey Amherst, Gen. Thomas Gage, Gov. Franklin, Gen. John Burgoyne, Lord Sackville, and Lt. Col. Kingston testified to his extreme loyalty and service to his country.

Col. John Wilkins, Col. Guy Johnson, and Gen. Garth proved the recommendation made by Gen. Jeffrey Amherst and Secretary William Pitt for Skene's establishing a barrier at the head of Lake Champlain between the French of Canada and the English of the colonies.

The crops and buildings were proved by Capt. Duncan Campbell, Capt. John Brooks (Skene's agent in 1774), George Dennis (Skene's agent before 1769), Lt. Col. Ebenezer Jessup of the Artillery patents; the seizure of his family and schooner by Gen. Benedict Arnold and Thomas Dunn; the sale of lands and family property by Sgt. Thomas Mason, Private Crane, the Rev. Harry Munro, and Lt. Cabel Green of the King's Rangers.

William Smith, Sir William Howe, and Gov. Franklin told of his imprisonment and loss of personal property, while Capt. Bowling, overseer of the Negroes, testified as to their value and loss.

Gov. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut, Benjamin Payne, keeper of Hartford gaol, David Smith, and Gov. Franklin of Pennsylvania swore to his imprisonment in Philadelphia and Connecticut.

After the letters and information were gathered, the memorial was prepared. The first part contained a summary of Philip Skene's settlement and his services to the British Government. This was followed by a list of lands and buildings and other items with their values. To authenticate the value and ownership of these, affidavits were included. Many more names were contained in the memorial than are listed here.

A summary of the land claim values follows:<sup>54</sup>

The first patent of 25,000 acres plus 9,000 acres of the second patent that made the 34,000 acres of the township of Skenesborough on which were the wooden saw mill, stone grist mill, bloomery and Skenesborough House and barn. £17,850

The rest of the second patent, 11,000 acres composed of intervale land and beaver meadows at East Bay. £ 4,950

2,400 acres on the Bay of Rochers Fendus at Westport and the 600 acres at the Cheever ore bed which included the settlement at Raymond's Mills. £ 675

The 2,000 acre McIntosh patent purchased by Philip Skene and adjoining Skenesborough. £ 675

Capt. Andrew Philip Skene's 2,000 acres on Paulet River adjoining Skenesborough with places for mills. £ 675

4,000 acres of Artillery patents around Fort Ann purchased from soldiers after Skene had settled it and built mills and blockhouse. £ 1,575

Point Catherine, 350 acres, six miles south of Ticonderoga with buildings for travelers. £196.17.6

The total value of this land assessed in Skene's memorial was £28,596.17.6. This is the land that some early books say was sold for £14.11! Before the Revolution a group of Dutch people offered Skene \$5,000 for 500 acres near the falls. A Mr. Ray offered him 20 shillings an acre before any buildings were erected. At the time of the forfeiture sale Gen. Philip Schuyler was willing to bid \$10,000 for the homestead and mill spot near the mansion house with 500 acres of land.

The memorial went on to list other items of property used by the British army or destroyed because of its proximity.

Bloomery of four fires and two hammers	£ 1,968.15.
Wooden saw mill	£ 250.
Stone grist mill	£ 350.
Framed mill dam	£ 200.
Three large framed bridges	£ 225.
Coal house and coal supply	£ 194.17.6



Framed overseer's house	£ 112.10
House for workers and Negroes	£ 150.
Skenesborough House	£ 750.
Household furniture, linen, etc.	£ 250.
Provisions of flour, pork, beef for tenants	£ 100.
Smith's shop with tools	£ 50.
Stone barn	£ 450.
950 cords of wood	£ 106.17.6
3000 saw logs at bank	£ 275.
8000 pipi staves	£ 56.
Wagons, carts, oxtteams, etc.	£ 50.
Schooner with rigging	£ 350.
Gundelo, batteau, two scows, and others	£ 100.
8 healthy Negro men and 6 healthy women	£ 600.
6 young Negroes	£ 80.
20 yoke of oxen	£ 200.
20 cows and 25 young cattle	£ 152.10
Spanish stallion and 14 brood mares	£ 175.
20 young horses and colts	£ 100.
Debts by book bond and mortgage	£ 843.15
9 years' rent	£ 2,025.
Crops and mills and houses destroyed at Fort Ann unascertained.	
Loss by expenses while prisoner	£ 500.
Loss by expenses family seized at Skenesborough	£ 600.

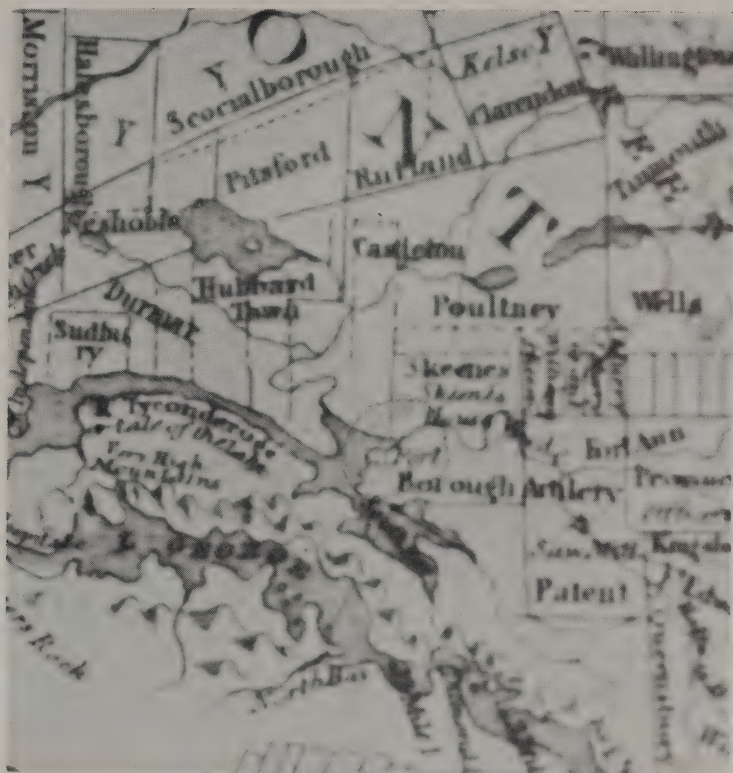
Following these were the many affidavits of those who testified to his loyalty, service, and imprisonments.

Claims and petitions, questions and answers dragged out. The Schooner *Liberty* claim was singled out from the general petition. The vessel had been captured by the British in Skenesborough Harbor in July 1777 and used on the lake. It was tied up in St. John's for several years and finally burned there.

Philip asked for rent for the *Liberty* from the time it was taken until the time it was burned, a period of 45½ lunar months. The commissioners felt that the hire of this vessel was worth six shillings per ton per lunar month. For some reason they paid Philip for only 39 months so that he had to petition again for the extra 6½ months and the value of the vessel, with her rigging and stores £440. This brought the sum he received for the red cedar schooner to £986. which was paid in 1786.

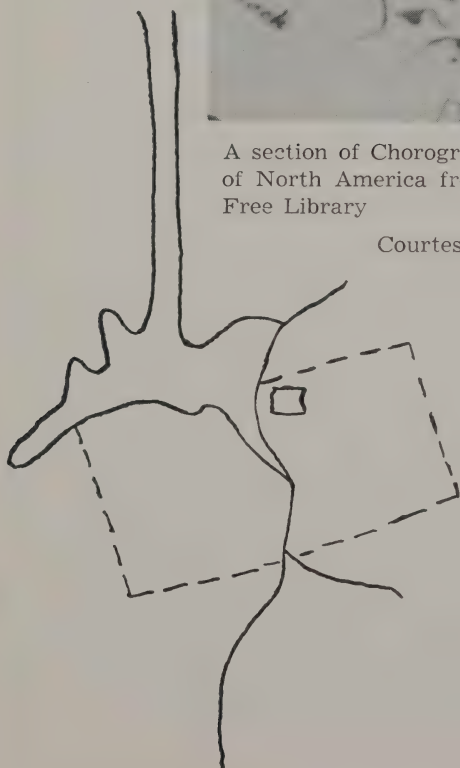
Finally he petitioned for the salary due him as lieutenant governor of Ticonderoga and Crown Point. On February 14, 1787, he received £1,528.4.4½ for his salary from the time of his appointment January 28, 1775, to September 19, 1783, the date of the peace.

With these sums and the annuity of £180 he was able to live independently the rest of his long life.

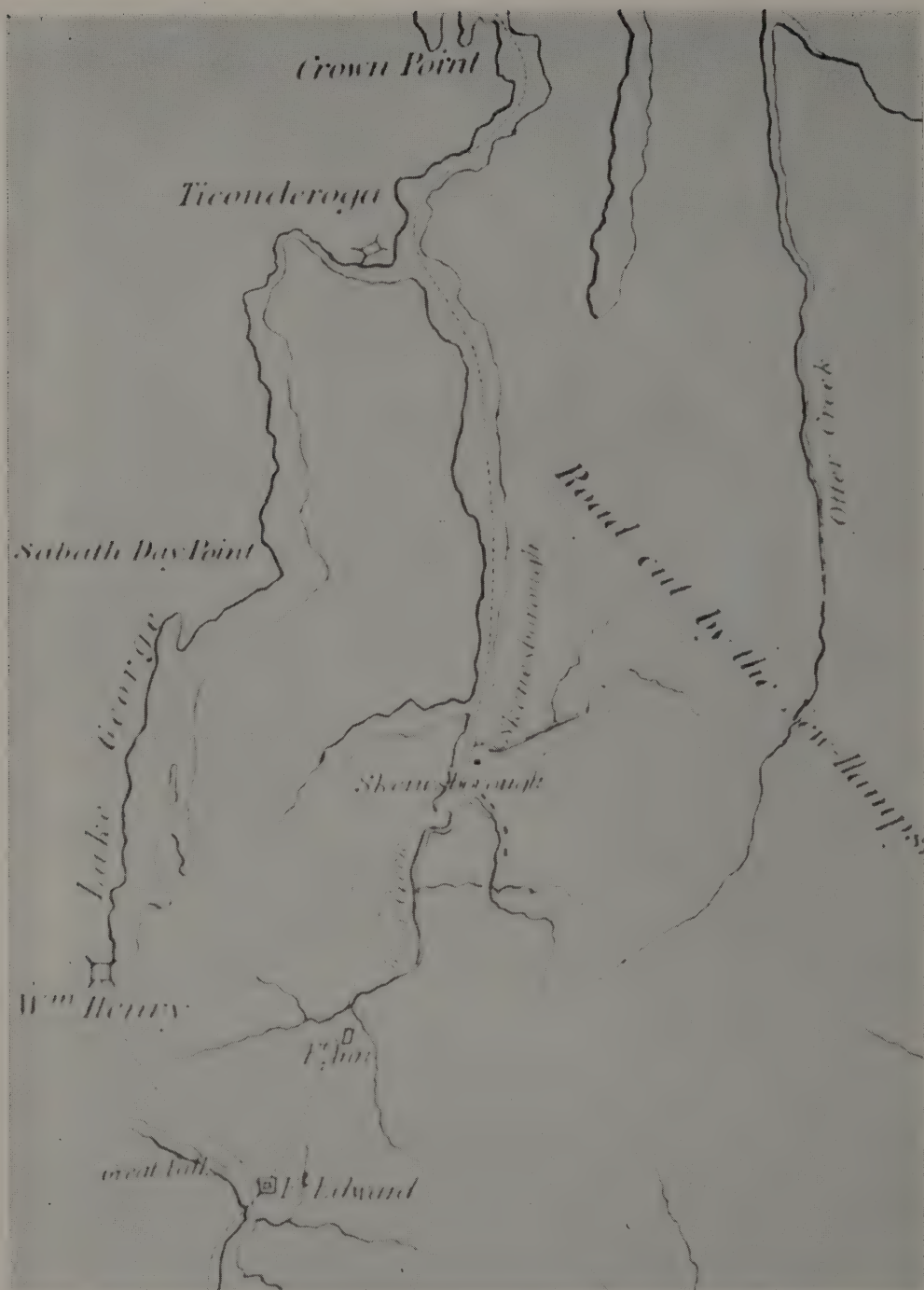


A section of Chorographical map of the Northern Department of North America from Adirondack Collection, Saranac Lake Free Library

Courtesy of Saranac Lake Library



A soldier's freehand sketch of the location of Skenesborough House with East Bay on the right and South Bay at the left in Documentary History of New York.



Section of route of Canadian Couriers  
Courtesy of Canadian Archives



New-York, June 7. 1765.

## Advertisement.

**MAJOR SKENE**, has obtained

a Patent for Skenesborough Township, in the County of Albany, where industrious Families may have Land on the most reasonable Terms, agreeable to their Circumstances and Character: Three Years Rent free, will be allowed, to begin and improve: from Albany to Fort-Edward is 50 measured Miles; the Road is very good, and well known: Wood-Creek, and East-Creek run through the Township: They are both navigable for Boats; the first within eight Miles of Fort-Edward, and 7 of Hudon's River; the last, from the South-East of the Patent which lies the Southernmost Part of South-Bay, (Lake Champlain) and commands a Water Carriage for 130 Miles by Ticonderoga, Crown-Point, Otter-Creek, &c. to St. John's, near Montreal; is, by many Miles, the shortest Pass from Albany to Canada; and no Doubt it will be the Post Road, and most frequented High-way from the Southern Governments. Nothing can hinder Passengers going in Boats from the Falls of Wood-Creek, (where there is a Town lately established, call'd Cumberland) to Crown-Point, &c. in Summer: this is not the Case of Lake-George, Vessels of 50 Tons But then comes to the Falls at Wood-Creek from St. John's, with Horses, &c. Fish and Venison is to be had in Plenty: All Kinds of Provisions are provided, and will be sold reasonably by the present Inhabitants to new Settlers: Limestone is in the Land, and the Soil is remarkably good for Grass, Hemp, Flax, Wheat, and all Manner of Grain: A Clergyman of Character, will settle, and build a House of Worship this Summer. Three Pence per Bushel will be paid for any Quantity of Wood-Ashes, except that from Evergreens; by this Means every Man may earn Money while he is clearing his own Land. The Condition of Rent will be according to the Situation and Quality of the Land: The annual Rent is to be in Money, or Equivalent in Produce; not to exceed One Shilling, York Currency, per Acre, equal to Seven Pence Sterling yearly, nor be under One Penny: A Lease for ever, will be given to all that chuse that Method. Any other Terms will be given, agreeable to the Valuation of the Land. Those that first come will be first served, by applying to Philip Skene, Esq. at his House on the Premises, or his Steward in his Absence.

N. B. A Saw-Mill is built on the Premises, and a Grist-Mill will be finished this summer. Particular Benefits will be given to those that understand Hemp and Flax. The Settlers on this Township have the Privilege by Patent, of chusing yearly their Constables and different Officers, from amongst themselves. For farther Information, apply to Mr. Gaine, at New-York.





Section of Medcalfe's map of the Country in which the Army under Lt. Gen. Burgoyne acted in the Campaign of 1777.

Courtesy of New York Public Library

## Lord Of The Manor

In 1788 Philip Skene bought two estates known as Hartwell Manor, 55 miles northwest of London, from John, Viscount of Hinch-enbroke, who later became the fifth Earl of Sandwich. Philip lived a short time in Hartwell House, a rambling place in the shape of an L with the front door in the angle. It has three floors and until 1900 was called the Tithe Farm.

From Hartwell House he moved to Addersey Lodge, a small stone house with a thatched roof about a mile and a half away. This house has since been pulled down but another built from its parts is called Eakley Lanes. Here on a farm, evidently in "genteel poverty", Philip lived out his life in the "court manner", as Levi Allen, the only Tory of the Allen family, described it.

Levi Allen wished to have it said that he was at home at Philip Skene's house. He took dinner there several times and wrote ingratiating bread and butter letters to Philip afterwards. Philip retained his friendship with officials of the government and worked to obtain favors for his friends and acquaintances. Levi thanked Philip for his influence in high office and wrote, "55I shall with your permission communicate all matters from Vermont through you to the Secretary of State." Philip obtained the management of Mr. Fitzmaurice's Irish estate for Major Bridgeham. February 9, 1791, E. Bridgeham wrote him concerning wine smuggling from France, asking that Skene present a practicable plan of his to the right court circles.

Philip was interested in both his farm and the Manor. As lay proprietor he placed Hartwell under an Episcopal jurisdiction and presented William Butlin as rector. In his letters to his daughter Mary back at Cheyne Walk in Chelsea he told of his farm life. Sometimes the weather was cold and the milk froze in the pantry. As older people are wont to do, he complained of the younger generation's lack of morality, their selfishness, and almost godlessness, and of the duplicity of friends.

On one St. Patrick's in remembrance of the happy days in Ireland he bought a few gallons of ale. He boasted of his hog which friends called the finest in England, weighing at least 32 stone (448



pounds). They came from miles around to see it. He asked Mary for recipe books so that he could use all the meat of the animal.

So passed the last twenty years of Philip's life. On Thursday June 9, 1810, Philip died at the age of 85. The Rev. I. Dawson arranged the funeral service and place of internment. He wrote Mary that Philip had asked to be buried in the chapel of the church. His right as Lord of the Manor made it lawful for him to be buried within the chancel. On June 14, he was laid inside the communion rails near his five pews in the northeast corner of the chancel of the church at Hartwell.

## Burial Place

Fifty-five miles northwest of London lies Hartwell, a pleasant small village centered by its church and cemetery. Inside Hartwell Church, as in St. George the Martyr's in London, is a record book. This one reads: "Colonel Philip Skene Esquire was buried in Hartwell Chapel June 14, 1810 suppost to be the first and only person buried there."

Philip, however, does not lie in this church. A mile or two away is Chapel Farm on which the chapel once stood. At one time the village of Hartwell was in this vicinity but for some reason, perhaps the Black Death, the whole village moved northward leaving the chapel behind. By 1852 this 700 year old church, recorded in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book, was pulled down. Its baptismal font, screen, pulpit, bell, and record book were transferred to the new chapel. According to Baker: *History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* the early English windows, the Norman doorway with its dog's tooth ornament, the priest's door in the chancel, and the open bell-cote of the new building are faithful reproductions of the originals.

Some of the stones of the old chapel were used to construct the present day farmhouse on Chapel Farm. Beside the lane to this farmhouse a large fossil-encrusted staddle stone marks the resting place of Philip Skene. A staddle is normally used to keep a rick of hay off the ground so the air can circulate under it.

Around 1890 Farmer Weston and his two sons were driving near the house when the wheel of their farmcart dropped into a hole. On investigation they found this to be a stone - lined vault over which a cartwheel had been laid. In this old chapel vault was a coffin. The wooden part was decayed but the leaden inner coffin remained. Members of the Skene family were notified and for a time considered moving the coffin to the new chapel. But the decision was finally made to leave it in its original spot.

The Weston boys polished the brass plate bearing Philip's name and laid it across the leaden coffin, first satisfying superstition by driving a nail into the coffin as a means of laying Skene's ghost. Over the spot they placed the staddle stone and chiseled on it the

name Skene and a date 1710, not realizing they were placing it 100 years too early.

Harry Weston, one of the two boys, 85 years old in 1954 when he recited this story, said he remembered being told that because of the great respect the village people had for the Lord of the Manor, Philip Skene, his funeral day was formally observed by the whole population.

Three thousand miles apart lie Philip and Katharine Skene, founders of the pioneer village of Skenesborough. She lies in an unmarked grave in Whitehall, New York, where on the mantle of the Masonic Temple is the keystone of their stone house. He lies in a grave in Hartwell, England, marked with a staddle stone the same shape as the keystone in Whitehall.



## Philip Skene's Family

Philip Skene arrived in Ireland as a second lieutenant with the Royal Scot Regiment in 1748. His duty in the Dublin barracks did not keep him strictly confined. In the small village of Arklow, County of Wicklow, just outside Dublin, he met Katharine Heyden, only child of Samuel Heyden and Katharine Bryne of Ballymanus. Katharine had had two brothers but both died in 1738. In this same year her Uncle Samuel Heyden of Dublin died and left her his estate of Kilmacow by his will dated September 27.

Philip and Katharine were married at the Parish Church of Arklow with a license granted in January 1750. During that year Philip became a first lieutenant. The couple must have lived in the Dublin barracks for a time for here their first child was born. Katharine gave not only her fortune to help her husband in developing his estate in America but her time also. She was looking for people to sail to America as tenants as early as 1759 when Philip was writing her of the estate he would carve out of the wilderness.

Katharine and her family were brought from Dublin by way of Londonderry to their new home by Philip in 1765. They landed in Philadelphia in December 1764 but went on to New Jersey where they stayed for the winter. The following spring they went to Skenesborough where the house and barn were later constructed. Mrs. Skene did not have good health apparently, for in 1770 Philip wrote of her sicknesses. She died in the year 1771 "of a decline" and was buried in the vault in the cellar of the unfinished house.

Andrew Skene, the first child and only son of Philip and Katharine Skene was born in the Dublin barracks on March 25, 1753. He was baptized by the Chaplain of the Royal Scots, Mr. Holy Burton, as Andrew Skene, but ten years later in 1763 he was confirmed at the Parish Church of Maynooth, near Kilcock, Ireland, by the name of Andrew Philip, evidently in honor of the uncle who adopted his father.

When Andrew was three, he was taken by his father to America when Philip was sent there on a tour of duty in 1756. The small boy was placed in the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Cutting at New Brunswick in the Jerseys. There and at Hampstead on Long Island he stayed, except for the trip to Ireland when Philip went for the

rest of the family, until 1769 when he entered King's College, now Columbia. In 1762 when Andrew was but nine years old he was made an ensign in the 27th Regiment of Foot in honor of his father and received funds for his livelihood as his father had before him from the Royal Scots.

Andrew was not exactly a model pupil at King's College. He did not write his mother for six months at a time. He was fined for shooting off a gun within the city limits. His name was placed in the College's Black Book because he was off campus after eleven o'clock at night and was caught crawling back under the fence. He evidently did not want to learn law as his father would have liked him to. Neither did he learn French as well as his sisters did in Canada. But as fathers do, Philip instructed his agent in New York to pay Andrew's bills for cutting and dressing his hair and for fine linen handkerchiefs, and to supply him with pocket money.

Andrew received his Bachelor of Arts degree from King's College in 1772 and went home to Skenesborough where he became interested in the estate. He had some land himself, for on August 22, 1769, he had been granted 2,000 acres of land as a reduced officer of the 72nd Regiment. This land lay to the north of Skene's Little Patent. Andrew petitioned to have it made into a township called Amherst. He had charge of Skenesborough when Philip went to London in 1774. In this same year Andrew bought a lieutenancy in the 43rd Regiment. When Philip was in London, he prevailed upon the military officers to have his own appointment as Major of Brigade to the Forces in North America transferred to Andrew. This was a very unusual procedure, but it was carried out because of the great esteem in which Philip was held.

Andrew was taken prisoner by the Americans on May 9, 1775. With his sisters, aunt, and John Brooks he was taken to Connecticut. There he was successful in having aunt and sisters sent to Canada, but he himself was kept in prison and was in Hartford gaol with Capt. de la Place of Ticonderoga when Philip arrived from Philadelphia. Father and son were allowed to go to Weathersfield and board at the Widow Hooker's at Philip's expense.

Since Andrew was not on his parole of honor, Philip abetted him in escaping within six months to the British Man-of-War the *Asia* that was anchored in New York Harbor. From there Andrew joined Gen. Howe's army. After the evacuation of Boston, he left for Halifax and was in the siege of Quebec in 1776 when Gen. Benedict Arnold and Gen. Montgomery attempted to take that place. In June of that year he sailed to England, arriving in July.

Andrew returned to Canada in 1777 with his father. They caught up with Gen. Burgoyne at Crown Point. Although Andrew was still

Major of Brigade, he served out of line of duty under Gen. Burgoyne. While Philip piloted Gen. Burgoyne's fleet up Lake Champlain from Ticonderoga to Skenesborough, Andrew went from Ticonderoga by way of Hubbardton with Gen. Frazer's troops. He "lost some skin" in the Battle of Hubbardton and was left with Col. Lamb to help care for the sick and wounded when the troops were sent on to Skenesborough.

During the British occupation of Skenesborough Andrew lived at Skenesborough House. He went on to Saratoga and on September 10, 1777, he was appointed to Capt. Frazer's Corps of Rangers. This, of course, was out of his regular line of duty. When the Capitulation of Saratoga occurred, Andrew was exchanged immediately and was sent back to Canada carrying a letter from his father to his sisters and the news of the Capitulation to Gen. Carlton.

In March 1780 Andrew had the heartbreaking duty under Gen. Carlton's orders of helping to raid Skenesborough and destroy his home. For the next three years he was on duty in Canada. He spent much time writing letters to help his father prepare the memorial for their losses at Skenesborough. His own 2,000 acres had been seized when he and his father had been attainted and it was classed with Philip's land. On March 19, 1783, Andrew obtained the brevet rank of captain.

In late 1783 he asked again for leave to go to England. His health had been bad for five years and the warm baths in England seemed to be the last resource left to help him. In England he was appointed captain of the 60th Regiment of Royal Americans. He lived with his father, going with him to the estate of Hartwell at Northampton.

When Andrew was 39 years old he married, December 20, 1792, Henrietta, daughter of David James of Sergeants Inn, London. They had five sons and three daughters.

During his military life Andrew served in the 27th, 72nd, 43rd, and 60th regiments. On April 28, 1798, he was appointed paymaster to the forces in the Northern District of Durham, Scotland. In this city Andrew died January 18, 1826, at the age of 73 years. He was buried in the southwest aisle of the Durham Cathedral, being carried to the vault in the Gallilee Chapel by eight old soldiers. Here also lies his wife Henrietta, who died three years later, December 1829, 60 years old.

Andrew's sister, Mary Ann Margaret, was the second child of Philip and Katharine Skene. Doubtlessly named for her paternal grandmother, she was born at Kilcock, Ireland, near Dublin, April 6, 1755. Mary went with the family to America, arriving at Skenes-



borough in 1765. She and her sister Katharine probably were sent to Quebec for their education, as Philip was very pleased with the French they spoke. After the death of Mrs. Skene, the girls were in the charge of their Aunt Elizabeth. Mary was unmarried. Her sister in a letter from Quebec to Philip hinted that Mary had had a blighted love affair.

Mary returned to England in 1779 and lived with her father and aunt first at Five Fields, Chelsea, and later left them to live at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. Here her father sent her letters describing his farm life in Hartwell, and here she received notice of his death in 1810. She died at Taplour Bushes, England, September 12, 1831, and was buried in a vault in the old church yard. Jemima Booth claimed that Mary was the father's favorite and that Andrew was jealous of her influence over Philip.

Katharine, the youngest child, had the name of her mother and grandmother but signed her letters Kathi. She was born in Kilcock in 1756 after Philip left on his tour of duty in America. Jemima Booth described her as a beautiful, spirited girl.

Kathi fell in love with Frederick de Piquet, a Swiss, whom her father evidently did not wish as a son-in-law. However, on the Capitulation of the British at Saratoga he sent her a short note, hastily written so that Andrew could set off with it to Canada, in which he said, "56When I forbade your marriage, things were very different from what they are now. I pray that you and Frederic may enjoy a long life of happiness together. God bless and keep you both."

In a letter sent to her father in Cambridge, where the British prisoners were held, Kathi described her marriage. She and Fred walked to the church and were married by a family friend, the Reverend Scott. She dressed in a butternut brown gown of her mother's, and wore her great-grandmother Skene's tartan cape. Her wedding ring was her mother's. The couple went to housekeeping in one small room, getting their meals in the landlady's kitchen.

In the same letter, written in December, Kathi said that Fred held the rank of a major and the governor of Canada would soon send him to carry messages to the Court in London.

This couple lived in Germany for a time. With the return of peace after the Revolution, officers' pay was cut again and again until they were extremely poor. There were three children, the first a boy, Philip Frederick and two girls. Kathi sent the boy to his grandfather when Philip wished to have his grandson visit him. When Philip laid his claim before government, he said that Kathi and her children were a part of his family to care for. This Philip de Piquet, the grandson, became a soldier.

The other member of Philip Skene's family in Skenesborough was his sister Elizabeth. She shared in the task of bringing up the girls, was witness to many of her brother's business transactions, signing various business papers. She owned a small farm and two small Negro girls. She made the trip to Salisbury, Connecticut, with her nieces and went to Quebec with them. On the news of the Saratoga Capitulation, she cried bitterly when she heard Philip had signed the paper with the words, "Philip Skene, a poor follower of the British Army." She said the title Colonel at least should have been used — as he had held that rank in the Militia.

On returning to England in 1779 Elizabeth supported herself by keeping a lodging house in Chelsea. After it became clear that no lands could come to her from America, she applied for aid from the Government. The officials were gratified that she had waited until she was certain she would have no other means of support before she asked for help. Although she had no real claim on Government, these officials, because of her relationship with Philip Skene, granted her an annual pension of £15 beginning October 10, 1784. Philip did not believe this amount was enough. At his intervention the amount was increased to £30, January 5, 1787. Elizabeth died in London, June 17, 1799.

## Philip Skene The Man

Philip Skene of Skenesborough was an intriguing individual. His boundless energy and initiative built a lucrative and thriving estate in the New World.

Bravery and cool courage in the first line of battles gave him not only physical scars but also leadership of men. Not one of his commissions in the British Army was purchased.

His education, whether formal or self-taught, gave clarity and smoothness to his voluminous business and social correspondence.

Through executive ability and foresight he obtained over 56,000 acres of land and settled a large number of tenants on it. His fair terms, tact, and aid during the lean years brought him respect and loyalty.

Acquaintance with leading military men and government officials was not superficial. Many of his friends were outstanding in their fields. Lord Dartmouth, after whom Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, was named, was president of the Board of Trade and Foreign Plantations. Lord Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America and founder of Amherst College, Massachusetts, always ended his letters to the officer in charge at Crown Point. "My regards to Major Skene and the other officers." The Earl of Shelburne, president of the Board of Trade, was Secretary of State under Pitt. The Earl of Albemarle, victor at the Havannah, appointed Philip Skene Town Major of the Havannah. Guy Carleton, the Baron of Dorchester, became lieutenant governor of Canada. Philip was godfather of the Earl of Shelburne's son, Lord Kirkwell. Countess Shelburne, also Countess of Orkney in her own right, was godmother of Philip's grandson, Philip Orkney Skene. This boy's first military duty was in the fortification of Hey in the Orkney Islands.

Personal integrity was the outstanding trait that ruled Philip's life. He kept his oral and written promises, performing his duty in all things and expecting others to do the same. His belief in the integrity of others led, in a large measure, to the British defeat in the battle at Bennington. This defeat at Bennington played an important part in making a victory for the Americans possible at Saratoga, a battle listed as one of the seven decisive battles of the world.

Citizens of Whitehall can be grateful to Philip Skene — soldier, builder, proprietor, farmer — for carving out a settlement at the head of Lake Champlain, which became the Birthplace of the United States Navy.



## Genealogy

Andrew (head of family 1605) m. Bessie Calder  
Sir Andrew (knighted by Charles I, 1641) m. Barbara Forbes  
John m. Margaret McGill  
John m. Elizabeth Wallace  
James m. Mary Anne Smith

James and Mary Skene had three children.

1. Philip 1725 - 1810 m. Katharine Heyden
2. James, Surgeon in East India Company's service, d. 1870
3. Elizabeth d. 1799

Philip and Katharine Skene had three children

1. Andrew Philip 1753 - 1826 m. Henrietta James
2. Mary Ann 1755 - 1831
3. Katharine 1756 - m. Frederick de Piquet

Andrew Philip and Henrietta Skene had seven children

1. Philip Orkney 1792 - 1837 m. Elizabeth Wood
2. David James 1794 - 1835
3. Andrew Motz 1797 - 1849 m. Rachel Jemima Walmesley
4. William Wallace 1800 - 1829
5. George Robert 1802 -
6. Katharine Heyden 1805 - m. 1. Richard Smyth, 2. George Hutton
7. Henrietta Skene 1806 - m. William Trotter

Andrew Motz and Rachel Skene had four children.

1. Andrew Philip 1832
2. Elizabeth Rosa 1826 - 1846
3. Augusta Maria 1827 - m. Charles Maude
4. Jemima Margaret 1836 - 1906 m. R. Booth d. 1913

Henrietta and William Trotter had eight children.

1. William Dale
2. Henry John
3. Margaret Jane
4. Harriet Susanna
5. Caroline Elizabeth
6. Emily Katherine
7. Charles Vaughn
8. Catherine Francis

The William Trotter family engaged in military life as did the Skene family, Henrietta Skene's son, William Dale Trotter, was a colonel in the Durham Volunteers. His son, William Kemp Trotter, was a colonel in the Durham Light Infantry in the South African War, Matabela Campaign.

William Dean C. Trotter, son of William Kemp Trotter, is the great-great-great-grandson of Philip Skene. He was a colonel in the 11th Hussars or Reconnaissance Corps during World War 11 with the Chinelitz-Wingate force in Burma. His two sons hold military rank: William Kemp, captain in the 11th Hussars, Adj. Gloucester Hussars and John Dale, captain in the 11th Hussars, A. D. C. Governor, New Zealand.

William Dean C. Trotter and his wife Mona now live at Staindrop, North Darlington, England, on the family estate.

## Notes

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11. War Office      Amherst papers      May 1761      Canadian Archives
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39. Trumbull letter      30 August 1775      New York Historical  
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44. Skene paper      New York State Library      Albany
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48. Langan paper      December 1775      New York Public Library
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53. Lossing: Pictorial History of the American Revolution
54. Loyalists Transcripts
55. Levi Allen letter      Burlington Free Press
56. Curtis: Kathi of Skenesborough

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British Museum Manuscript Room

Cambridge University

Canadian Archives

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Connecticut Historical Society

Connecticut State Library

Fort Ticonderoga Museum Library

Hartwell Church, Hartwell, England

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Skene's mill at Fort Anne from Anbury's Travels



Andrew Philip Skene

